

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

REGINALD C. ROBBINS

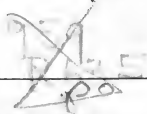


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POEMS
OF
PERSONALITY

REGINALD C. ROBBINS



—“*to speak beyond the book*”

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POEMS OF PERSONALITY

PHARAOH

YEA, now at last to let this people go !
Out from our cities and our fertile lands
To drive them to the deserts and their death !
Truly a terrible revenge, to thrust
Them forth to sure starvation at their prayer !
Yea, for I loved them as a Pharaoh may,
This people prating of their Most High God,
And pitied them and fain had cherish'd them
To build me temples, rear me granaries
Even as in days of Ramses ; him, the Great.
Then came their sorceries of flies and frogs
To torment Egypt. And I still forbore
And bound them to me as a Pharaoh may
Firm for protection from the false purport
Of Moses and of Aaron whom I loved not.
Fain had I saved them, ay, and still forbore
For love I bore them : being myself their God,
Descendant of the Sun, Lord over all !

Ha ! do they dream, if that my father, Ra,
Favors my favor'd in this fertile land,
He will be other than a blistering flame

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

To scourge them through the bitter wilderness ?
Nay, shall He not bewilder those He blinds not
With fever-fancies of some towering cloud
By day, some phantom of His flame by night
To lure them madly further to their doom
Ever beneath His mightiness the more
With each day's wandering southward, till the crags
Of Sinai mock with laughter the last wail
Of them who perish miserably, seeking
A northern country and a shepherd clime ?
A terrible revenge which I, the son
Of Ra the mighty, wreak on Israel now !
I had forborne ; but when my first-born fell,
My favorite child, to their foul sorceries
Then did the wrath of Pharaoh sneer at last :
' Unto their God now let this people go ! ' —
And they are gone. As journeying birds at morning
Settle upon the temples and through noon
Bless all the priestly place with beauty, but
By evening are flown wholly away ;
And Amen's princely home glooms desolate :
So are this folk from Goshen gone away —
Themselves unto their doom : as birds in some
Fierce tempest of the northern ocean fall

PHARAOH

Broken and beaten back throughout our coasts. —

Shall I permit that those my love hath rear'd

And nurtured to be builders unto Ra

Shall to the sorceries of one or two

Fall sacrifice ? Or shall I save them still ?

Shall the east sea rebuff the last of them

Struggling toward Egypt ; that they die along

His shores in hundreds, calling on my name ?

Or shall the God in me regard them still

My children, though my first-born be no more ?

As they are men, are they not men like me ?

As I am God, are they perchance not gods

My children, godlike as mine own first-born ?

Was my wrath man-like, god-like ? Was my grief

Worthy of Pharaoh that I sought to slay

My people by ten-thousands ? I will still

Be Pharaoh, child of Ra, lord over all

My people, equally with them divine ! —

“ Call me my captains ! Hale my chariots forth

“ And bowmen ! I will bring this people back ! ”

MOSES

THIS people ! Is it thus I led them forth
From bondage to be free ? Yea, is it thus ?
Doth Egypt, Egypt bind us, though these sands
Of God's great desert be our lodging-place
And fetters and their flesh-pots are no more ?
Yea, is it thus ? That freedom needs a law ;
And I, alone from out that multitude
Of idol-worshippers who once were slaves
Yet servants also of the Most High God,
That I alone must meet God face to face
In His high mountain to be messenger
Of uttermost authority : and now
Stand, fresh from God's strength, stricken of despair
Here statue-still upon this stark hillside ?
Lo ! and the tablets of the absolute Law
Destroy'd, dropt shatter'd from mine hand ; and all
This speechless blue and death-strewn silent crag
Echoing to the fragments, bit by bit,
That burst and, bursting, hurl down unto dust !
Now shall I front this people and be dumb ?
I : who went forth at the command of God
To learn God's purpose and proclaim it to them ?

MOSES

Yea, shall I front them ? Or, once more, face God's
Eternal patience ? . . . Are we fit for Him ?

Fain would I feel : ' Because God chooseth us,
' Are we, His people, holy and most fit
' Unto the privilege He layeth on us ' ;
Fain would be slave unto the Most High God :
But shall be servant, wisely reasoning of Him
And of His patience, His authority,
And whether we be worthy. That I know
Before this hour of my temptation pass
I shall be faithful and confirm'd to seek
Anew Jehovah, saying to Him : ' Lord,
Again give Thy commandments ' ; that I know me
For still His servant, scarce releaseth me
From need to prove and comprehend how God
Can take for His, servants who need command ;
Slaves who can yield no service save for task !
Is God task-master and no God of Love ?
Then were He Pharaoh, and we further from Him
By every journeying in the wilderness ;
His pillar of fire by night, of cloud by day
Some false god's ; ay, this exodus a lapse
Unto idolatry ; as now I see it

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Below me in the plain accursedly !
Then, yea, were it false that men might ever be
A chosen people : for the chosen of God
Were then His bond-slaves, strangers most from
Him !

Nay, God hath said : ' Ye are my chosen people ' .
And He hath led us forth from Pharaoh's power
To be no longer bond-slaves. Wherefore God
Is no task-master, but a God of Love !
Whence, then, this need of law unto our love ?
Whence this relapse and infidelity ;
My sacrilege, impatience ? How may we
Transform God to a seeming task-master
If fit to be the chosen of a God
Who hath no bond-slaves, nay ; but freeth us ?
Lieth the fault not in us none the less
While yet by wonder we are worthy still ?
Pray'd not I once unto the Most High God —
' Dismiss Thy servant, Lord ; for what am I
' To bear the burden of Thy high command
' To lay on Pharaoh ? Who am I to be
' God unto Pharaoh as Thy word hath said ?
' Wherefore, I pray Thee, Lord, dismiss me now

MOSES

‘ And give Thy word to one more fit for Thee ! ’ —
Blaspheming. For Jehovah, for a sign,
Wither’d mine hand within my bosom, turning
The flesh more leprous than these sands ; but then
Restored it whole as any flesh : to show
By miracle how, though He knew, as none
Of Israel might know, my leprousness,
He yet would make of me an holy thing ;
Laying a task on me, though God of Love !
Then when at last this people lay encamp’d
By the Red Sea ; and Pharaoh’s host drew nigh
To threaten all with vengeance : that this folk
Lost heart, blaspheming how the graves of God
Were narrower than Egypt’s ; did not He
Stretch a great cloud along the coasts by night
And part the waters with a wild east wind
From off the shallow places of the sea
To let His children pass unseen ; till God
Open’d the eyes of Pharaoh but too late
And caught him with returning of the sea
Betwixt two waters, him and all his hosts ;
And saved us : meaning by the miracle
How though He knew our human helplessness
Who fail’d to trust His help before the world,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

He yet would save us to be helpmate to Him !
Wherefore is God in us as we in Him :
Eternal miracle of trust and worth :
We worthy of the trust we wholly need.

By miracle ? By nature ! As we are men,
To fail from faith ; as we are God-in-us,
To be His people, leading on and on
A light unto the nations and a triumph
In each endeavor ; as the way of God
Is to be Father to His folk that fail !
For how else were He God ? How else were
men ? —

Therefore need I in nothing now deny
Our absolute unfitness to be God's
Great chosen people : mine unfitness for
This life-long privilege of speech with God.
For in my sacrilege and mute despair
At these idolatries, I feel how God
Works wondrously unto the knowledge of God
In me and wisdom of His ways with men.
That freedom needs a law and is no love,
Shall mean in God's good time a Law of Love
Unto our helpfulness. Whence are we now

MOSES

God's nearest, fit unto the task we find ;
And therefore chosen of the God of Love.—
Wherefore, to God again ; and say : ' Once more,
' Lord, grant us Thy commands, which I destroy'd.'

GAUTAMA

THE night is solemn and the mind 'awake :
Calm, yea, and almost wholly passionless.
The myriad-glistening blackness of these boughs,
Image of insight, calleth silently
To contemplation whilst my limbs repose
Beneath their canopy and rest with them —
The myriad glistening of the glow-fly still
Like thought that rests not though the body lies
Along earth as the limbs of those who sleep,
My comrades at my feet whp learn of me.
Though these friends sleep and are at peace as
dead,

I sleep not but must muse until the dawn,
When time shall be that action be resumed : —
Action, ay, nowise consonant with peace. —

Nay, then, if life be passion and they be,
The passions, wholly evil, how prevail
(Being a living thing) to work aught good ?
If all be false whereof we are aware
(And only therefore meriting contempt —
The things of sense and feelings form'd of them),

GAUTAMA

How can the truth be anywise attain'd
Save in annihilation? And to cease
Wholly hath never been mine aim to teach. —
How might a man conceive that he should cease,
Save as by sleep whence even these blest awake?
And how conceive continuance without sense
Of individual being still maintain'd?
There is no soul continuing through death
Indeed; yet Karma haply were some soul
To those enlighten'd who perceive past births,
And otherwise might hardly operate
To yield identity to several forms.
Yet is the broad assertion full believed
(Oft have I taught it, falsely as I fear!)
Of depravation and delusiveness
Which wholly true would transcend remedy
By contradicting any self-felt truth,
Standard of good or cosmic objective.
And my philosophy (as men construct
My doctrine and require consistency
Of system, I as seer have ne'er discern'd!) —
My form'd philosophy were nothing save
All thought be nothingness — although my thought
Belies the asseveration! To assert

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Aught, should disprove my creed of nescience,
Of peace by contemplation wholly void.
Therefore am I two teachers ; and my word
Some duplex half-truth ; and the world I leave
Unto these faithful (followers of me
Here sleeping at my feet through the soft night),
A strife irreconcilable between
Theory and practice as the night and day!
Lo ! if the night's denial of the day
Be ultimate, then shall they never wake
To dawning, nor might this my musing be
A vigil of the truth — how can be practice
Where theory denies ? The night still means
The coming morn, as sense though wholly false
Implieth an intelligence of sense
Not void but individual as I ponder.
I taught not truth — that so shall practice be
Hollow pretense and theory be proved
Itself sham and delusion : that my creed
Be subtlest source of false establishment
In faith, as likewise in vacuity
Of conduct striving still toward emptiness.
Shall I allow that day, my noble path,
Shall be resumed unreconciled with aught

GAUTAMA

The serious night and vigil thus profound
Have taught me of truth consonant with Self ?

I can conceive a rule of faith not mine
Yet still renunciative (still of night
The peace-bringer in silence !), based in truth
Of mutual compassion as mine own
Though nowise seeking thus to annihilate
As I all passion whence compassion comes.
Lo! for, behold! if sympathy be good
(If there be balm of night even in day),
Itself the highest good in all the world
(Strange contradiction of soul-turpitude !),
Even as my doctrine teaches, then the world
Is leaven'd by compassion whilst, without
World, would the highest good whereof we know
Be lost for substitution of the void :
The vanity of sleep, in place of peace
By comprehension as I wait the day.
I cannot yield to nothingness a world
Of whose fate I am still compassionate —
Valuing compassion as best cause of peace !
I with a world to save must still redeem
Myself by means of that virtue alone

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of sympathy which hath been seed and source
Of all my ministry ! I seem to feel
A meaning wherein sympathy, not death,
Not riddance of this individual life,
Achieves salvation, universalizing
By an identity of distinctive selves
The lone-lost microcosm : how the day
Of insight, ay, in action saveth man
Day's creature ; not recourse unto the night
Of moveless contemplation. Can the world
Anywhere, anywise contain a man
Who fearlessly shall face as I faced not
The loss and pain, the single loneliness ;
Alleviating all the sin of the world
Not by abandoning the concrete good
But suffering good in evil ? In some least
By my renunciation have I thrust
Evil upon myself and thus done good
As by compassion ; and have thus deserved
Haply not that absorption in the All
My heart hath pray'd for, but some new re-birth
Even in a clime and age where I may show
Some practical divinity of man,
Some steadfastness in insight sympathizing,

GAUTAMA

Yea, to the death : that I be born again !
Methinks I see me, not enthroned on high
In endless musing aimlessly maintain'd
For lack of any purport, but aloft
In suffering rear'd upon a torture-throne ;
And then anon beneath some charnel-hole
Buried that I may rive and rise again
Re-born within all men and be as God
A savior and a spirit by sympathy
Nobly maintain'd through sharing of all woes
In self-appreciation : that all men
(Not by annihilation of their woe
With self ; scarce by escape, but acclamation !)
Shall feel their solidarity with God
Even through my ministration. And at length
Shall the apostles of that last god-birth
Enlighten these my followers of this first :
And be themselves enlighten'd by contact
With rumor of this earlier mysticism.
For they in turn through ages shall have lost
The first fresh personal cognizance of God
Within, believing only that I died
(I the world-passionate of the later days)
To save mankind ; not that men, each, are saved

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

By personal compassion as was I.
Whence in the contact of the alien creeds
Shall haply spring regenerance of both : —
Faith founded as my present faith is founded
In individual potency to be
(No matter how) all that we know of God ;
Yet form'd no more in Nescience for a Way
Nor in denial of God-personism :
A faith form'd as my future faith shall be
In passionate activity of self
Instating and instated of the time
And place for action, not (as in their faith
Of ages after me) declaring truth
To be of time and place not theirs but mine
Only (forgetful that my life and theirs
Are one in selfness and divinity).
Haply a third — were it conclusive ? — birth
In guise of him who not with parable
But with convincing logic may construct
The scheme of such a world of godly men !
(Ah ! but the beauty of a forthright proof
To faith, yielding consistence, self-support
And system to truth arbitrary else !)
Haply a million births, each yielding truth

GAUTAMA

In some new words but never losing grasp
(After the Two who spake in me half-truths —
Two half-truths now ; two half-truths now and
then —

Have once been reconciled within the Third !)
Of the divinity of sufferance,
The world-salvation of compassioning,
The nothingness of any life beyond
A world, like this, of limit and of change ! —
Ha ! and, behold ! the glimmering of the dawn
Responsive to the vision of that Day,
The holy passion that possesses me.
I will awake these sleepers and proclaim
The new-won insight of the truth to-come ! —

Nay, but, alas ! what if the limit be
(Even as this night, ere birth of day, must die
Despite their mutual interpreting)
Also a final ; and my life (man-god,
Yea, though I am) be now a final life
Fill'd with its half-truth, and the nobler half
Be never mine : be his, that later Man ?
How might I then announce this failure to them ?
Though self can cease not, neither be absorb'd

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Unto Nirvana (an Nirvana be
Annihilation!) yet perchance self were
Complete, made total by the stint of deed
Perform'd 'twixt birth and death (how, I know
not;

Lacking a logic for the fact I feel!) ? —
Lo ! even then were my half-truth the whole
Of some fulfillment. (Hath not even this night,
That dieth ere the day, proclaim'd to me
Day's healing nighthood?) — In this world of pain
The pain of being finally fulfill'd
In self-acknowledged error ! That my name,
Believed-on, shall breed nescience and a creed
Of practical observance without rule
Or check to superstition ; and, so far
As truth is known of me, to be condemn'd
As worst of the world's failures, who would save
But could not : saved himself, but not the world ! —
The night dies back, the day advanceth, dread
And passionate, unwitting of the ways
Of insight, cruel beyond sympathy ;
And calling on me to maintain that creed ,
Men comprehend of peace by nescience !
Did I declare the vision, I 'd achieve

GAUTAMA

Truth to myself by sacrificing hope
To save the world. Behold ! be the world saved
Though in my heart I know my life hath fail'd !—

But, then, if life be evil, how not fail ?

CHRIST

WHAT were the purpose of a proud reply
Unto these priests ? They know not what they do.
Yet, whilst they still talk on, must I in soul
Answer 'before my father', yea, for me
Their witnessing : ay, is it false or no ?
Now, while the tumult of their questioners
Is fiercest, while the insult and the shame
Shelter me with impenetrable hate
As from the love of any man of men,
May I, unwarp'd of too much passioning
For pity of these people, weigh at last
Worth of my ministry, ay, estimate
Wherein this outcome I have long foreseen
Were fair and fortunate, crowning with rich
Accomplishment ; wherein 't were inwardly
As openly a failure ! Let me be
Passionless as this cup is passionate ;
Yet, as no Pharisee of all, a soul
Alive with comprehension of the loves
And hates of men ; their clings to old truths
Grown stale and false ; their yearnings still for new
They scarce may understand : hence not for them

CHRIST

Ripe truth : I among men a man, like these
Not ripe to understand, cleaving to false
Even for the need of men's companionship
By ministry ; yea, for the teaching's sake
Which fails from truth by every stale-meant word
Half-wantonly meeting the times' demand. —
Nay, Caiaphas, no compromise from now ;
No failure more from truth by any word
Meant to be understood. I have found
How men miscomprehend ; and still have told
Nothing of my best message unto men.
Now let my death atone ; for sins of men
As my sin let this crucifixion come
For my full meaning and companionship
In ministry no man need understand
To comprehend its purport to be true.
But, lo ! (how safe this uproar shuts me in
Out of the sight and sound of all whose ears
And eyes would fain have open'd !) how did I
For zeal and pity yield a leading where
The light could scarcely enter. All seem'd truth
Even as I spake it ; image seem'd the fact ;
Figure, the message. For I loved men so.
Now is the figure forsworn for the fact ;

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Image, despoil'd of vision, witness'd forth
In guise of ministry. Yea, is their speech
False-witness? Father, or have I proved false?—
Nay, not from now! Only, let thought rehearse
The history: what was; what should have been.

So, Caiaphas, speak thou whilst silently
I weigh thine accusations. Let them swear
Their false truths: I will take upon my life
Their falsehood, to attain unto their truth
Of inmost self-belief even by my death;
Not otherwise. — So, they accuse me here
Of sundry blasphemies. Have I blasphemed?
Scarce by intention. Yet I grant them truth
Of plausible misinterpretations. I
Spake but in parable, for want of words
To meet their outworn ways of speech, yet speak
The new truth utterly. I gave them stones
For bread: the bread, how should they eat of it?—
So, I have 'stirr'd sedition', counseling
No reverence for priests' authority!
What was my word? 'Blind leaders of the blind';
'Wolves in sheep's clothing'. Did I mean or nay?
Father, 'mid this serenity of hate

CHRIST

(Love-perspicacity of inwardness),
Which shields me round (concludes within my will
An infinite use) from any need to serve
Too sympathizingly the blind and wolves,
Find I the fact-interpretation: these
Blind but by plenitude of light in me,
Wolves but by my full innocence of harm;
I still by figure of the fact, by so
Refusing self-responsibility
Of imputation, equally with them
Blind leader, wolf-destroyer of the fold:
Such for the figure. Save the new truth come
Despoiling old, remains old error truth;
Save the old error stay to be gainsaid,
How were the truth not-false? And I had meant:
I find them blind and wolves who save for me
Had been light-leaders, guardians of the fold:
I thereby blind and wolf; they, through my truth
Proved of their falsehood, equally with me
Light-leaders, shepherds. By my parable
I nowise speaking utterly a truth;
I an authority sans self-belief:
Thus have I sinn'd against authority.
And men miscomprehended but the more. —

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

So, I have 'mock'd the Sabbath-law', who heal'd
Sick on that day and ate with unwash'd hands
'Mid sinners! Not against authority
These deeds but rather against forms approved
Of present practice; items half belief
If still half sanction? Yet were sin the same:
A failure to confess responsible
For law's shortcomings me the source of such
Subverting practice; else a failure to
Admit law-conscienced deeds of mine worth faith
Only by virtue of denying law.
As of the blind authority I taught
For teaching's sake as though authority
Beyond mere man's opinion crush'd theirs out —
Meaning: my more wide-wrought opinion proved
In virtue of my comprehension theirs
Not self-sufficient, total; so of law
I spake as though some source beyond all men's
Deliberate practice posited my deeds
For lawful — meaning, as I now aver
(Yea, Caiaphas, push swift to judgment lest
My soul forestall thee!): sense of law in me,
Values of ordinance for purpose 'proved
Of conscience, show'd their formal sanctionings

CHRIST

Trivial, comprehensible of mine
Intent ; by virtue of my will, annul'd ;
None less a lawfulness save law-deposed.
Such were my sin 'gainst sanction ; I a law
Without self-proclamation utterly.
And men miscomprehended but the more. —
So, I have ' taken upon me to forgive
Sins ' ? And in so forgiving fail'd to show
'T were but my holier bearing in my faith
For new law beyond sanction which show'd sin
(Otherwise righteousness concluding all,
Which theretofore were righteous, for some sin)
For sinful ; as the sinfulness alone
(Like previous sin proving their deeds some right)
Proved righteousness in my deeds : righteousness,
The wonder, beauty, meaning but of life
Conclusive utterly, self-organized,
So world-constructive inly. And I spake
As though some mercy over beyond men's
Sense of a mutual frailty each for each
Forewent the punishment — meaning : mine own
Insight and sympathy of soul's estate
In me as them saw each unto himself
A scourge sufficient ; hence, a mercy-seat.

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

So did I sin, forgiving ; I, a peace
Without avow'd self-conquest. Can I now
Assume by any grace beyond this sin's
Self-torment to forgive my life at last ?

Nay, 't is my soul that fail'd in all these things :
Myself that spake and sinn'd. I at the last
But learn the nature of each son of man,
Myself as any : so to speak and sin
Failing of self-responsibility ;
By reason of the need of minist'ring,
Of compromise with souls not mine (nay, mine
By individual insight !) thereby
Imputing to some God beyond this world,
Some world beyond this soul's, the sinless lore
Of full accomplishment : but such would be
Nothing accomplish'd. Lo ! it is my truth
This falling short of truth ; even my death
Were half-accomplishment, some falling-short
Of perfect self-possession save I be
Inevitably born for compromise
Rightly fulfill'd, ay, comprehended well
By sheer misunderstanding. Now I see
No failure. Let me but seal up the sum

CHRIST

Of perfect operation by one last
Word, one last teaching, compromise of truth
Supreme of self-divinity with their
Stale fiction of a God of Abraham !
What were a God in whom no falling-short
Betray'd truth's utmost self-sufficiency
By error, self-proved, constantly annull'd ?
Such self-annulment constituting sin
Divine : for where were any act not God ?
What were a world beyond soul's world which fills
All birth and death with sacrifice, through strength
Of service, mutual ministry, each least
Person proved universal, absolute
By world-inclusive insight, soul through soul :
Absolving misinterpretation, yea,
By rich love-needing : still gainsaying hate ?
Let me annul this last uproar of hate
To one death-sanction for the love I bear
All men. Let me avow to this sin-world
Its sin's finality by being as sin
Still self-redeeming ; nay, no mercy-seat
Beyond : hence sin's forgiveness each through each.
Let me uphold the law's authority
By reason of our self-accountable

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Ultimate judgment both of false and true.
Let me declare God and my ministry
One ; scarce by dissipation of this strength
To 'heaven's right-hand and wonder-throne', though
still

In those sole terms their ears can understand
Of physical kingship and some power afar.
Let me affirm (if not that men may now
Have insight, that some hour they apprehend)
My manhood, conscientised personality
By virtue of this self-responsible
Accountability through every act
For failure as accomplishment ; my spirit
Divine. And there is nought beside divine
Save world-belief, conscience-totality !

Hark ! For they now accuse me : 'Didst thou say :
' "I, God are one" ? And art thou then the great
' Messiah ? ' — Shall I give them of the bread
Of life, faith of my faith : still in their phrase
Of false-proved figure ? Shall I stand at last
For understanding's sake so utterly
Miscomprehended ? Ay, for such the full
Accomplishment ; that all shall comprehend

CHRIST

The absoluteness, so divinity
Of failure ; the all-comprehensive truth
Of self-sufficiency even to death !
Lo ! for the teaching's sake ! I, born to teach
Death-mastery, the overcoming of
The last infirmity : man's fear to fail !
Here in this final failure to speak truth
('T is inmost holiness ; 't is ultimate use)
Is mine accomplishment. — The hush is vast.
Man's whole life listens, waiting on the word
Which saves the world :
“ Caiaphas ; thou hast said.”

PILATE

NOW are they hot for Herod : they, that pack
Of priestly wolves, of scribes and sects and dogs
Of jealous dogma ! Would but Cæsar send
A rescript for their riddance ! Yea, some year
Shall tens of thousands Jews hang crucified
'Twixt heaven and earth, I warrant them. — Till then !

Now, what of Herod ? Will the flattery
Befool him ? Will he exercise a right
Of judgment o'er his subject in a seat
Not his ; and give the Roman legions cause
To rape Peræa ? Will he scent the trick,
Send Jesus unjudged back to Pilate's door
By Hebrew cunning ? Rather may he seek
A mutual flattery in pronouncing this one
Free Galilean ; in Jerusalem
Not his to hold. For Herod is astute,
Knows that I favor not their Sanhedrin
Nor law-prerogative in priests and scribes ;
But would for Cæsar Cæsar's. — How that phrase
Of this philosopher fits well the tongue ! —

PILATE

And what of him they carry with them there
Cold, calm and stoic, him whose blood they seek
For being perchance more Cæsar's friend than they ?
Now while they swarm at Herod's gate I'll set
(Should they by evil chance hurl howling back)
My soul more steadfast to resist their lust
Of blood by musing on his meanings here. . . .

When I did question he did plain reply. . . .
Even as I told them I shall still maintain :
'The man is just. I find no fault in him'. —

How can I then condemn him ? For the law
Chastises not the proven innocent.
Only — there are causes beyond the law
Why Cæsar's service might enjoin for now
An acquiescence ? For they well might raise
Tumult like that at Cæsarea when
I, being unprepared (as now !) to quell
By force of arms, was forced to yield a point
For Cæsar's sake. It will not come to that.
Yet but I wish I had my garrison
Of Cæsarea at Jerusalem ! —
No more of this. 'T is Cæsar's, best, to sway

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The mob by absolute justice ; not by fear
Of legionaries ; nor by mine own fear
Of being impeach'd at Rome for failing please
The Jews — a fool's chimera ! I have friends
High-placed for my defense. And yet —

I'll still

Deny priest-vengeance and protect the man.
Ay, fain would I address me to his soul
To learn of him. For is not wisdom wealth,
Power and kingship to the citizen ?
How much more thus shall I over this folk
Be governor, be Cæsar's servant well
By being disciple ; he my master. I
Decree no punishment. I give to him
His freedom so but he converse with me,
Yield fair reply to questions fairly put
In daily intercourse. I offer him
No courtiership ; for he would spurn it of me.
He is no parasite ; is too much man
Of wealth, power, kingship even in himself
To want a Roman's favor : he, the son,
So credibly they tell me, of some god ?
Haply. At all events a man who stood
And nobly said : 'A king am I' — still meaning

PILATE

A wise man. For he added: 'But my kingdom
Is not of this world' — meaning, as I know,
Not kingdom like to Cæsar's. 'T is such wisdom
I would attain; for I am weary of
A Cæsar's favor and a people's wrath.
'T is some fresh Attic teaching that he speaks
And I would fain acquire; fain to be king
As he; and rid of this time-serving strife
Which fawns and flatters, yelps and snarls; and seeks
No well-made manhood, true self —

Hark! What sounds!

So soon swung back! And in what hot-flung haste!
What fangs and wolf-yells! I've but twenty spears;
The rest at Cæsarea. Will my friends
Stand firm at Rome? Can any man be wise
Needlessly to provoke a tumult, force
Himself outdriven from Jerusalem
To Cæsar's wrath and uttermost disgrace
Just for some stickling at the law? I ne'er
Let law prevent my vengeance; shall not now
Be hinder'd of my glut of blood for this,
When the time serves. But now, 't is Cæsar's best
Service to yield a point so seeming-small,
Injustice to one man. Scourging, perchance,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

May sate them? At the worst 't is forced upon me.
I'll leave it to the popular voice to choose.
Not mine the guilt. —

And see! What fool is this
They mock at? Certainly, a man who makes
So fine a fool-king can be no fit source
For Pontius' instruction! I were fool
To make weight of the matter. Let men bring
A basin that, when things go ill with him,
I'll show them how I wash before all men
My soul from business with this King of Fools!

JUDAS

JUDAS! — The name is hateful; yet it clings!
Yon street-hag jeer'd at 'Judas'! — Such a priest
Call'd 'Judas? Judas?' and I came and took
The thirty pieces which he offer'd me;
And kept them with me, with me till but now!
The Master still said: 'Judas, thou art he'!
Judas! It is the name of such as I!
It hurries desperate now, grim through noon's glare.

Judas! I thought to have flung the name beside,
There with the thirty pieces now I flung
Full in his face, the priest who call'd me by it!
Yon street-hag I pass'd headlong, cursed I her
For any cause save 'Judas'? — If perchance
She knew not I did give the money up?
Call'd me the old name for the stale reproach?
Would speak some other could I tell even her
The torment and repentance? —

None would speak

A new name: not the bearer of no name!
Nor should I hear it: I can hear but one,
Judas! Nought else so hateful in the world

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

As cheek by jowl with me to cleave by me
And be my leman-life to hound me on :
Even as I kiss'd him with a leman's kiss.
The hag shrank from me ; but the name abides.
The world would let me go. Not so this Judas ;
Which will with me and hang with me this
hour !
With me : a Namelessness just by this name !

Judas ! It was the Master called me by it.
'Tis so it sticks ! — Not that did such a hag
Jeer 'Judas' ! She were such an one to deem
All creatures Judas. I but yield a name
To all men and all women ; not myself
The Judas solely. Nor that such a priest
Call'd 'Judas ? ' ! When I flung the pieces back
Was Judas quite a nobler sort of man
Who does God service nor demands fair pay ;
The imputation cancel'd of reproach ;
And 'Judas ? ' flattery : a name not quite
For any creature ; even I myself
Not Judas wholly ! Ah ! Were these things
so !

Then should I hang this day with half the hope

JUDAS

Men might forget Judas had such a name. —
Nay, but the Master : ‘ Judas, it is thou ’ ! —

Judas ! It is my name and mine alone.
Judas ! I thank thee, Master ; who speak’st truth,
The right name : Judas, wholly and alone.
Judas ! I thank thee, Master ; that ’t is I
Who hang this hour for being but such a name.
There is no other. I fulfill the name
Utterly ; take away from all men else
And women possibility to be
As Judas ; none less evidence the world
Judas for pitiless perdition ; not
World’s flattery nor menace any more.
The street-hag knew she need not fear to be
As Judas ; Judas were her saving strength
Who knew none other. Such a priest did know
Blood-guilt were no God-service. Both are saved
By my perdition through the Master’s word !
Master, I thank thee. Judas ! ’T is my truth.
Here is the bough where Judas for the world
Hangs that he be true Judas : and none else !

MARY

THOSE distant moving twain upon the hills,
Those will be John and James returning to me
Even from afar and after many days.
They had not faith to 'wait His coming', here
With Zebedee their father and with me ;
Must needs go forth and among many men
To preach His gospel. How could they expect
Men to receive the truth they scarce have held :
The faith of my Son's presence with all men ?
'T was Peter's place ; 't was all of truth he had,
To be evangel : theirs to love and 'wait'.
'T is the first failure. For my Son fail'd not.
Yet used He home to me in those great days
And I used forth to meet Him. Let me now
Anticipate these prodigals who come
(These distant waxing twain upon the hills)
Even as my Son was wont to come to me,
In those first days of calling of the Twelve,
Along this footway. I will fare me forth
To meet them. Would there were my Son with them!—

So soon the world forgets. Forget not I !

MARY

My soul is living with the light of words,
Deeds, looks and breathings of the soul of Him
My Son, and my Son only ! No pains else
Did bear Him to the birth that shall not die.
Yet, those Hosannahs. Yet, that feast of palms
And people hailing Him, my Son, my Son !
Where are those many faithful ? Are they then
Crucified as my Son, as my soul too ;
And may not rise again as He, my Son,
Hath risen and my very soul with Him ?
Were they so fond and are they now so faint ?
How sad must be their weakening. 'T is for them
The fond yet faithless that my whole heart grieves :
Even for James and John amongst the rest ;
Who needs must seek complete a work, so whole
Already with His mission ; needs must forth
To supplement His teaching : and have fail'd
Convert a world which was already His
In His good time ; yea, now and always now.
See they not : it is still the selfsame earth
Of Him, my Son, in which His words and deeds,
His looks and breathings sanctified things all,
Yea, resurrected God's sweet countryside
To an undying wonder ? Nay, the world

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of speechless things and folk without a soul
Forgets not. Can men's souls alone forget ?
Alone forget, alone who need to know ?
These are the pastures and the little hills
Of olive ; this, the way wherein I walk,
Was trod by Him ; and yonder is the blue
Whereon He stood appearing unto them.
It is His earth and His unendingly ;
Mine earth by faith in Him, by ' waiting for '
Fulfillment presently, yea, present now
Without completion more. Can aught forget ?
Yet but have James and John forgot and fail'd ;
Now home are coming, ay, to tell me of it
For comfort's sake. And I will comfort them,
Tell them anew the story for their faith. —

Yea, here are John and James, who from afar
And after many days return to me
Even by this footway, whom I wandering forth
A little further than my daily wont
Now greet in coming, as they crown this hill
Sudden appearing. I have yearn'd for them
In absence. And their nearness seems a new
Rebuke and chastening. In their mien I see

MARY

No sadness for the world of humankind
Their brethren, brethren also of my Son.
No sadness for themselves ; no failure, no :
But a great light. The spirit of my Son
Transfiguring their faces to mine eyes
Is with them twain. And all their poise is high ;
And as they come they talk on mighty things
And bring a whole world with them. — Shame, that I
Had deem'd myself worthy to hold alone
(Deeming these John and James and all men faithless)
The sacred intercession unto men ;
Had deem'd the work complete, though I in mine
Undue assumption dream'd that I alone
Knew this His second coming evermore !
I ? What have I, who weakly tread this way
Within this circuit of these little hills,
To know of God's good mercy, through my Son
And these, unto all multitudes beside
Who only need to hear, so to be saved ?
Nay, but who needs must hear ; else are not saved !
Yea, I have sinn'd, been faithless. Can I bear
Their holy greeting ? Will mine ears receive :
Mine ears that did so very near forget
The meaning of His sacrifice for men ?

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Was I His mother, who forswore His world,
Denied within my soul men's faith in Him? —
Hark to their greeting; 't is as my Son's voice:

' We hail thee: Mother! — For no man forgets!
' The people all receive Him with the Word! '

MOHAMMED

AND I arise and face the flowing east
As in the days of youth, before the Creed. —
Here have I sate amongst these tombs of stone
Beside Medina in the desert stark
This night-long. Till the dawn at last hath sprung ;
And, with the dawn, God's speech vouchsafed anew
Unto the worn and feeble ; as of yore
In days of strength to me on Meccan hills : —
Now in the name of God, compassionate
And merciful, who speaketh by my mouth !
For I have said : ' Cometh a day when no
' Soul can avail aught for another soul ;
' For the ordering on that day is with God.
' Yea, and the soul shall know what it hath wrought '.
Thus have I said : ' The soul shall surely know '.
Thus have I said, knowing the soul shall know ;
Knowing that God's the ordering on that day :
And therefore certain of the ways of God ;
I intimately cognizant of God
As of my being and my very soul.
Wherefore a new interpretation springs
Of this my ministry : even as the sun

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Startles to flame yon angels of the gale,
The storm-sands swirling just above his bed,
As he, the lord of heaven, awakes, starts forth
And burns the world to wisdom ; so my soul
Sees but itself in all that it hath wrought
And makes a day of judgment of its own !
Lo ! if I intimately speak for God
The truths that yet spring wholly in myself
By my conviction and imagining ;
Then are not God and I even in these truths
One, as the truths are now intrinsic to me ;
My judgment and my prophecy, the same ?

Is it a dream, this hour that I have taught
Of future resurrection, even that day
To-come of judgment ; is it then a dream ?
Is this high-streaming sun, that bursts across
These shimmering-silent death-stones, God's sole
sun ;

And all these hosts of waiting dead, asleep
From now forever ; and no waking more ?
For if my lord and judge be with me one
And this my prophecy be judgment too —
As now I feel it in the certainty

MOHAMMED

That souls shall know ; I therefore knowing the
soul ! —

What space be for the plain tautology
Of God beyond man ; who am in myself
God in so far as God hath power at all ;
Who am mine estimator and my judge
Now whilst the common dawn leaps forth to-day ?
If I have fix'd a faith for every man
Even unto all-time, am not I at fault
To fix for future what were novel-sprung
To each anew, and only thereby fix'd,
Man's birthright : judgment, conscience of himself ?
Shall not each man who leaps as I have leap'd
With sunsurge to divine identity
(Upright nor prostrate-cringing any more !)
Condemn the pitiful hypocrisy,
The hitherto shamefacèdness that led me,
Feeling the fire within yet to deny
And say : ' God shall be ' ; meaning ' God is now ' ?
Yea, and if God be Now, how might I fix
A faith to all men who must equally
Each in his time be God's ripe judgment-day
With estimate anew to suit each time
As perfect as is now to-day my faith ?

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

All was illusion ; both that hour to-come,
And power to fix faith to a future age !
Lo ! in my newly-found divinity
I judge ; and judging must condemn the creed
That call'd me here, that laid these dead about me
Waiting beyond Medina for the word
Of God, in desertness enduringly !

The word of God ! 'T were then idolatrousness
To wait the speech of the oracle, when now
The living God is speaking as I speak.
One God or many, if beyond the heart
Of any man, were utmost blasphemy
Alike, unworthy of mine absolute soul. —
And yet, the comprehension of the crowd !
Lo ! had I said : 'The very God behold ye !'
Then had they worship'd me : and been betray'd !
Yea, had I cried : 'Earth's judgment is fulfill'd
'Even in the judgment-reasoning of each !'
Then had they stolen and slaughter'd, ay, straight-
way
With obvious impunity ; and sinn'd !
Yea, for the folk that feel not Godhood in them,
No all-responsible insight of earth

MOHAMMED

(And how there be such godless, yea, I know not ;
Though till this instant was I one of them
Wholly ; as now in ignorance confess'd !),
Were judgment yet to-come and God afar ;
His speech unheard save still reported to them
Through all their days. And therefore must there be
Slaughter and rapine in the name of God
To fix faith, as I find it, unto all
Who feel not God. And therefore were it meet
That these within their graves should wait till God
Alive in future peoples plough their bones
Into some sudden garden where was waste :
And end earth's desolation. Though myself
Have had some resurrection : and am saved !

So I incline and pray toward Meccan fanes.

DANTE

I, DANTE, have depicted all these things
In imitation of mine heaven and hell
Within ; I, Dante, drew them as I saw them
To duplicate the passion of my soul :
Like some basilica of Christ on earth.
And like some lordly-hewn basilica
Covering earth where only naked earth
Alone before had been ; so have I given
Spiritual power of philosophy
Where had been brutish feud and vacant brawl.
All things now known beneath the heavens, beneath
Earth or beyond the empyrean, all
Have furnish'd forth mine imagery, themselves
Acquiring passion as I spake of it.
And all have been a picture of my soul. —
This Beàtricè, would her own soul know
Herself so marvelous matured with truths
Till now not said of woman ? Would the child,
The little maid I knew, the bride-elect,
And lastly the frail matron recognize
The mouthpiece of Madonna and of Christ ?
This Beàtricè, should I look to take

DANTE

Her salutation passing in the street
As formerly, or should I see some wench
Unlike the lady of that crystalline?
Shall not mankind to-come, seeing my soul
So strong, so tragic-passionate through this
The symbolism, come to ask at last :
'Was Beàtricè woman of the flesh
'At all? Was Dante this world's citizen?'
How subtler than subtlest theology
This doubt and question! In my soul to-day
An introversion of the accustom'd orb!
My life hath been iron reality
As spear, axe, hauberk and those towers of strength
Men rear'd in their Firenze out of stone;
Stone, yea, and iron hath been my pilgrimage
Through years of exile; and my tragedy
Hath only been so flame-hot passionate
With bitterness and stern relentless wrath
At evil Italy, that earth hath fused,
Grown plastic to the furnace of my spirit
And — blown all into smoke! Where is seen smoke
There towers are fallen; where my soul hath breathed
Lie ruin'd very real realities.
Where Beàtricè beams beatified

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Was every hour a maiden passing by. —
But, shall conviction of a literal sense
Keep true the symbol; or shall men mistake
Earth all and hours of iron virileness,
Human heart's-love and worship, for the words
Of otherworldliness and wanton dreams?
Shall the basilica seem faith alone? —

Were not the world right yet in wrongly taking
The symbolism of my work and song?
Hath not my method served its own defeat
By treachery within the very walls?
Hath not my soul been exiled by my verse?
For I 've but duplicated this my soul,
Have built about my passion a tower on earth
Not meant for earth to stand and fall on it,
But for translation to the terms of God;
Have pictured, ay, described though scarce express'd
The power of him who dwelling upon earth
Not imitates but vitalizes faith
By acts accomplish'd. Hath not mine own creed
Dissever'd church and state, awarding earth
To emperor, soul to the man of Christ,
But reconciling neither? And if I

DANTE

Portray by paradox the power of Christ
Through giving over His basilicas
To anti-Christ, shall anti-Christ be saved
By calling them still temples? An there be
The mystic sense to all that I have sung,
Yet are the words the words of sensuous things;
And, on the assumption of unsensuous soul,
Must merit men's discrediting as writ.
The symbolism must defeat itself.
The vivid emphasis on things of earth
Not merely cited for theodicy
Discredits soul itself ; unless the terms
Taken of earth shall stultify themselves.
I, Dante, have denied my birthright, making
Life but a replica of visioning:
Heaven and hell erected, excavated
Above, beneath no firmament of man;
Nor purgatory recognized for earth.
I, Dante, of a stone and iron age,
Who knew but man and woman; hated, loved
But man and woman and this marvelous earth;
Have only dream'd and told men of my dream;
I, Dante, have discredited my world,
Have lived at soul mine exile in my verse

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And left my life's reality a doubt. —
I am the last of them that shall mistake
A portrait of a dream for world's real truth.
I am the last, who, missing upon earth
The realm of Christ, yet strongly feeling earth
Its powers and passions, hating, loving it
And moved to mighty speech, must spoil that speech
With architecture of a spire, a pit,
(Beyond the all-purgation of this life)
Exhausting all of knowledge, yet unknown.
I am a limitation unto men;
If in my strength of style impassable,
Yet also in the weakness of my way
Of giving earth expression. For no mode
Were less convincing of reality,
Were more the manner of a mind at dream
(Dispatriated by mere shift of the scene
From speech to verse though both are native tongue)
Than this of emblem and this ordering
Of each event unto its symbolism.
No man shall make a poetry less real.
So have I fail'd by sheer excess of strength,
Pursuing to disruption world and soul;
And am but creature of my passing age :

DANTE

I, Dante, lost in thought's duality
And rendering unto God no genuine things
Of God : by thus discrediting things all. —

Yet am I greater than mine age in this :
That I would at the worst establish earth
Of power imperial (to Cæsar things
Worthy at least of Cæsar) and lead the way
By genuine emphasis of vital facts
To disregard of otherworldly lore,
Of symbolism and false-parallel,
Speaking the plain expression as I see
And feel and move about and am of earth :
The true Italian tongue though Italy
Be there Firenze, here another state ! —
Exhaust the symbolism, disregard
The shadowy-doubtful necromantic myth
I wove of Faith and Reason ; and take of me
Fair purport, as I wrote experienced truth.
Thus were the tale no duplicate of soul,
But soul in some degree thirst-satisfied
By utterance of the matters of its wrath
As these affect its fact and are its life.
Firenze, ah ! Firenze ! how I love thee

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Who am an exile hated of thy race!
Ravenna, how I hate thee though thou holdest
Body of mine and, with that flesh, my soul!
These are the tragedies whereof I walk'd
Incarnate poetry, by some mistake
Mask'd in an oracle and mystery:
These were my soul-purgation without end!
Ah, Beàtricè, thou I mostly loved
While mated to another and thou dead!
Thou woman: thou a dream, but that this soul
And body saw thee still and yearn'd at thee
Though knowing thou wast not! These are the things
I truly spake and felt and fully meant:
Unwilling exile in that spirit-world
Which I alone best knew for truth of earth.
The first of some new race of men am I
Who, Greek-like, Roman-wise, dwell all on earth
And live with it and love it and beget
By earth high poem-progeny — not like
Barren scholastics cloister'd in their lore.
The first of some new race who, Greek-like still,
Yet burst beyond the Greek in that their soul
Cleaves to no atom-struggling 'gainst the fates,
No refuge in atom-indifference,

DANTE

But continence with passion-power combined
In this sublime sense of concluding earth
(Of rendering unto God God's things call'd Cæsar's)
Learn'd of the symbolism. Where heaven and hell
Have been or seem'd to be can nevermore
Be passive agony, but masterful
Appropriation of all literal truths
To re-create : for soul is master now.
If little save the chronicle of crime
Of Italy accursèd I have spoken ;
Else the death-phantom of a finite love ;
Yet is the chronicle a novel art
Prophetic of a poetry wherein
That high philosophy call'd Reasoning Faith
Shall sing incorporate with facts of earth
Not parallel'd, not paradoxical,
But literally universalized
Unto world-permeant intelligence
By insight of soul's self-eternity
'Twixt birth and death. I, Dante, born of earth
Yet wandering in the fiended forest of things
Call'd past ; else through some void futurity
Of seraph-crystalline, stand born at last
Anew. Hell sinks ; heaven lifts. (Italian tongue

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Preserveth me from exile in the verse
Else native to no earth !) I humanly
Wake in Ravenna unto world's worth now. —
I, Dante, have discern'd a world's purgation.
I, Dante, have made self-contain'd an earth.

COLUMBUS

FROM the accomplish'd triumph here am I! —

I have no triumph to report, my queen;
No mere achievement; yet a truth so strange
That Indies sink to insignificance —
Though the significance were Indies' still!
I have come through some tempests of the soul
More vast than ocean-thunders; and have seen
In storm-burst vision of vitality
New-born to earth but by the wreck of all
Which hitherto hath held us: you, my queen,
God and our Empire all within that wrack
Concluded, victims of the visioning.
Now have I come to register my truth.
Hearken me, pr'ythee, for I stand here now
With some authority for service done —
Even though 't were service Spain may scarce survive!

You who are under God in special place
Of privileged communion, need not know
The fear of failure; for your thoughts are straight
From God. I have no privilege; did need

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Success to live: and I have found success,
Am proved before myself and you and God
Sane and assured some insight into things.
I am not close to God; but I can say
With humblest dignity I may love close
My sovereign as God: I of my part
Sovereign, who lay new Indies at your feet.
Though are there moods when I would still undo
The great discovery, and be as one
Not near his sovereign nor himself a king.
Hark! for I fear a failure, as I fear'd
No failure from the winds nor waves nor spheres
Of meteor-influence. And 't is yours, my queen,
This doom; not as you may be under God
My sovereign; nor yet as I, being man
Yet sovereign in myself, so make you God
To this my being; but as in yourself
You are as I no sovereign; under God
A subject, so in fear of failure too,
Needing success to live. — Nay, hearken me!
The seas have heard me, and I speak their voice! —
Here are these Indies newly at your feet
Laid for the glory of your faith and mine.
They shall be vast and great; and on their wealth

COLUMBUS

Spain's resource be upbuilded many years.
Yet have I breathed their breath; and feel their life
A new thing and a menace to old faith.
There, God is otherwise than is our God;
There (by the new insight which I have gain'd
Of world and system — though I want the speech
Of some ensuing age to give these truths
Words and right meaning, and must founder so
By paradox!) there must a sovereign
Be otherwise than is my sovereign;
Myself be otherwise than here I stand:
More worldship be to God where worlds are fresh
And full of untold interests and faiths
Which mean no mere unvital imagery
Of truth, imply no otherworldliness,
But are some Godship in their life's estate,
More worldship; though less frail humanity!
More humanhood be to the sovereign,
More sovereignty to the meanest churl
(And only so some Godhood to them both),
Where opportunity to be one's law,
One's church and state and justice all in one
Springs of the forest and the novelty
Which shakes establish'd custom, buffets forms

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of prejudged failure else ordain'd success
(Of old-world slavishness) with salt-sea foam.
(Had I the speech of some ensuing age!) —

Nay, 't were no treason. Yet myself have been
Convicted of a grievous blasphemy
Who sought a new Spain under God who gives
No new for old save with the death of old.
Yea, it is new, but it shall not be Spain,
Its sovereign no queen of old Castile
More than its God is God Granada-wise !
I am an old man, yea ; but I have seen,
Am made anew ; and feel a sovereign-like
God-comprehension in my veins that mocks
(Save a new faith and hence a new respect
Self-lawfully be overt to new speech)
The old unreasoning obedience
(As ocean-tempests mock obedience)
To faith-prerogative. — You tremble, queen !
Strike if you will ! Perchance I may return
From yon west hemisphere one day in chains
To expiate what I but now have said ? —
Nay, but I fear not. For, as under God
Are you my sovereign even in this place

COLUMBUS

So Spain is under both ; but not New Spain :
More than am I no sovereign of myself
In those far Indies whither I once more
Depart (by leave) to learn new God, new faith,
And a new nation builded in the death
Of this ; of you, my sovereign ; of your God !
And with the old I fall and die away
Doubtless ; but must project my soul upon
All destinies as you shall never do.
Here may the monks a thousand years to come
Wail masses for your soul ; there shall a growth
Of unborn peoples daily at their heart
Learn me, my meaning in the speech my speech
Would mean. — Our wealth shall flourish and be great
By reason of these Indies for a space.
But now the faith, the Empire, falls away
Even into nothingness ; and we with it.
Yet have I seen and sought to tell to you
The insight you may ask in turn your God :
Ask God Who told me but gave scarce the speech
Of some ensuing age that you might share
The vision : none less true, filling my soul
With meaning. —

I of the doom'd ship have stood

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

All darkling : suddenly when the whole night
Opens ; and there is cloud-wrack and the wrath
Of myriad stricken waves ; and then the black
Is verberant through all the blinded void !

SAVONAROLA

FIRENZE I have served my seven years
And now am come to suffer for her sake
As men have died before me : martyrs, saints —
And now myself, mere Prior among priests,
Girolamo. Yea, 't is strange that I have come
Unto such noble company. But God
Was ever gracious, ever spake to me.

When was He otherwise to any man
If men but would take heed ? My only claim
To merit in the sight of God or man
Were heeding then the message. Did I heed it ?
The query were not of my meed as man
Merely ; of that I were indifferent ;
Could take no heed for saving my mere soul,
Nor now, when face to face with death, accede
To private casuistry, were my worth
Alone involved in my life's estimate.
But I have been that leader of the blind,
God's humble vicar with the souls of men
At stake on mine. For I have had my day
Of power in plenitude in name of Christ,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of vicarage to wide effect on earth,
Though fallen so low to-day in earth's own sight.
God's wisdom be the fall ; let it not shame
The power that hath been — but because the sign
I hoped from heaven hath come not nor shall come !
Let the apostleship stand firm and fall not
With this mere faltering of the flesh of me
Before the drawn cord and the searching flame.
I will examine by full confessional
Mine own career now closed ; and let it stand
Fair yet or foul for men to know me by.
There hath been other record, false I know,
Inscribed and publish'd of the inquisitors.
Let this my silent searching of myself
By God's grace permeate the minds of men
Mysteriously to let them learn the truth
Of mine example set — as I shall learn it.

All sums itself in one : that I denied
Power of any potency of earth
(Putting my trust in God, not Frankish princes !)
To gainsay God ; making my faith the test
Of God or anti-God in earth's affairs.
May be 't were that I ought not even conceive

SAVONAROLA

Of anti-God establish'd in the earth :
So be it. But there be those who under God
Assume the power of God to plunder men.
And such should be resisted would we serve
God wholly and directly as we may.
Nor, for I now confess it, spake I well
When claiming prophecy, the gift in me
By vision of the things unseen of men
To speak for God as other than mere man :
Foretelling future things by oracle
As pagans use. For such a prophesying,
Such speaking for our Lord, were beyond speech
Presumption on my part and on God's part
A supererogation. Speaks He not
Through every tongue of earth if men would heed ?
So it is true that to this least extent
I solemnly recant: I spake as one
Men call inspired indeed, but not in kind
A prophet different from other men
In all of whom faith like to mine might fill
The void with some afflatus. Reasoning fair
With knowledge of the times, with faith in right
Conclusive in me of the truth of things,
I could forefeel and did foretell indeed

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Much chastisement and mine own doom at last
As now is come upon me — *Gladius*
Domini super terram. The worst wretch
If suddenly possess'd by gift of God
With faith in right might prophesy as well.
That were the only gift, the faith in right.
And only so have I been prophet here.
So be it. I man to man resisted firm
The oppression of the powers that claim'd from God
Power superior to my people's power
Whereof from God I was the guardian.
The pettier tyranny, Lorenzo's rule,
Foul Piero's pretense, I spurn'd to oppose
Directly nor countervail by counterplot,
Save as I served Firenze by my voice
And persevered for peace if honorable ;
But being irreconcilable to death
I but did well : the Medici deserved not.
But now hath been the Borgia, he who claims
The Keys of Peter. Did I well with him ?
He conquers this my flesh : by flesh I fight not—
'T is spirit that is protagonist. Yea, shall
He conquer then my soul who no soul hath ?
I stake upon the proof of simony

SAVONAROLA

Mine absolute refusal to allow
Pope Alexander to be proven Pope.
Say not the scholiasts all, that place obtain'd
By fraud endoweth with no authority ?
Between this Alexander and myself
There is no worthy combat. He is nought.
He burns my body ; but him my soul ignores.

What then the doubt, if there hath been no Pope
With whom dispute might lie ? As man to man
He was beneath contempt, should fill not now
One moment of the life remaining to me
Which should be wholly dedicate to God.
But there is world without these prison-walls,
Firenze still, though hostile, at my feet,
Example set by me unto all people,
And misconception of the speech of me
And false report ! And 't is to serve God still
If I bewray mine hours yet left of earth
To silence question, free from my career
If possible without recant from truth
The imputation of revolt imbued
Schismatic, scandalous within God's church.
'T were shame of this that made me oft-time yield

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Where right was mine against authority
(As world would misconceive !), where I by yielding
Endanger'd self, weaken'd my flock's support.
And it is now this rumor of schismatism
Moving and waxing when I am no more —
'T were this I truly fear, deeply regret
In mine attempt now closed to purge God's church
Of rottenness. The rottenness alone
Might never cleave asunder what God meant
For one Church universal. Had I lived
Longer, to urge the Council and conduct
Myself the Cause of Christ against those crimes
Call'd Cardinals and Popes, then had there been
No danger of a schism from that I wrought.
Their creed is my creed, could they but repent. —
But now 't is otherwise. The time was short ;
And I have left the purging unperform'd
And reconciliation unattain'd.
It were to any outward view a war
'Twixt me and Rome, this Prior and the church :
A fatal heresy ! — I seem to see
In some outlying land where Emperor
Is ever jealous of the pride of Rome,
Where fervor of the rich, symbolic creed

SAVONAROLA

Is chill'd by frost of some hard northern clime,
(Ages from now may be, yet child of this age !)
A stout schismatic rise and cry : ' From him,
' Girolamo of Ferrara, him who bade
' The Pope go burn in hell his thousand years,
' From him, this martyr'd Prior of San Marco,
' Came the first blow of the mallet on the wedge
' Which now I wield to thrust the structure down
' Divided from itself. Savonarola
' Who first put inward grace 'fore outward chrism,
' The first schismatic, first protesting priest :
' To him be honor and glory for his crime ! '
So shouts the Teuton. And the accursèd crime,
The desperate revolt from God's true church,
Spreads frenzied down the ages ; and the world
Is rift in twain ; and God is no more known
In mystic union of His Church on earth
The one and universal. There shall be
Rivers of fire and burnings, yea, of blood ;
Wars, devastations ; and my name be claim'd
For anti-Christ's great patron by my fault
Of struggling now against this Borgia ! —
Lord, if this vision be vouchsafed by Thee,
Forgive the error of my fight for Thee !

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Accept the penitence for crime unguess'd
But in Thine own inscrutable wisdom proven
Mine irremediable shame and sin ! —
No vision need it be, then, Lord ! if Thou
Still to the last vouchsafest me no sign ?
Only mine insight into mine own deed
Its necessary consequence of shame
Despite my soul's intention — insight aided
By rack'd nerve, twisted sinew : my sight at last
As now longtime of many ! Here I kneel
Foregone, bewray'd indeed : my contumacy
Proven 'gainst the unity of men's belief
In Thy Church universal ! To have set
Mere private judgment, personal unity
Of reasoning faith above Thy best bequest,
Thine instituted Body ! Of Thy Spirit
The mind knows nothing, save by outward works
As Thou, Thy Church, ordainest ! 'T is thus we
 heed

By heeding them who hearken'd long ago
When Thou wast upon earth — authority
Closing the question of power ! — Whom men call
Pope, against him can be no just recourse ?
Lo ! I have hitherto aloud denied

SAVONAROLA

The excommunication. Before men
Have I been cogent in my reasoning
Contra authority ; whilst nought obtains
Of logic nor of reason to avail .
Against the scandal I have caused thereby.
Even this self-searching, ay, were scandalous,
Unwarranted and proving nought of truth,
Knelt I not thus in Thy confessional !

Lo ! when the time for absolution comes
In the last hour before the people there,
That absolution I will meekly take
Publicly to my spirit, that the church
(Perhaps therethrough my teaching may be true?)
Shall triumph through me though my teaching fail.
I must not perish excommunicate !

MICHELANGELO

THESE are my children: these, the Night and Day.
For I have wrought them with my body's power —
Persons more of my procreation than
Stuff of an artistry of thought and soul. —
'T were not that slowly and with patient pain
Under mine hand I made them hour by hour
These creatures moulded of the graven rock.
The slow gradation toward maturity
Were in thus much no thwarting to mine art
But rather proof of reason in the whole,
Of sight before and after. But being made,
Grown to the semblance of heroic truths
And left (as I have left them these few years
Unchanged) well-nigh eternal where they lie,
They still are stone, an occupance of place
In reproduction of my form humane
As I am body moulded to my height
And breadth within this frame of universe.
And therefore are they creatures of my body,
Children in likeness of my fatherhood,
Unlike the sexless self-completed soul
That, needing nothing to perpetuate

MICHELANGELO

Its self-eternity, of largess makes
World of itself, createth as a God.
Somewhat there was within me as I wrought
That seem'd not procreative, seem'd self-whole.
Somewhat there bides as then abode in me
Of self-intention in mine offspring here ;
Not vulgar imitation of man's frame.
Men will no doubt detect some spirit in them.
Yet is that somewhat spoilt, as I conceive,
By grossness of the literal contour still
Suggesting need that for the artist-act
Were prototype in earth of other-sex
My mate ; perversion of perpetuance
From proper flesh and blood to senseless stone,
The still-born of an heart hermaphrodite
Wedded to world and moulding of its marl.
Here before all men lieth mine heart's disgrace,
Who, yearning with divine creatorship
Internal to mine absolute insight
Of spiritual beauty (as God made me so
Beautiful in His sight), have sullied self
By part-performance false of natural law
In imitation of the God Who made
(Himself, above the law He made for man,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Sexlessly procreative, self-supreme !),
Above His law of nature mating two,
Flesh out of fiat as I made but stone.
Man cannot make a man of flesh and blood,
The image of himself in stuff of earth,
Save by the woman-mystery. My way
Had better been to hew vacuity,
Essay no semblance from the block incised
Which still for all my labor showeth nought
Of the true man that breathes and moves and knows.
I had been better wedded to some wench ;
Well-quit of carving whilst my children grew
And flourish'd and were I, body and soul,
By mystery perpetuate in the world.

Yet have I loved not, scarcely until now
Felt want of woman for the weal of me.
My works have issued from the unsex'd stone
(Or man or woman) mere humanity,
Not fatherhood nor mother, male nor wife
If individual beyond old types
In all else, Titans merely, sexless gods.
Haply the procreation by these blocks
Allay'd the natural longing of the male

MICHELANGELO

For femininity and served the need
Of offspring all the while I dream'd them art.
Haply my grim mismarr'd envisagement
Found favor of the marble I but woo'd
As any lover with assured success —
Though still I fancied soul, as man hath soul
(The power that is beyond the body's power),
Created in me out of day and night
These and the sundry monst'rance of my craft.
Me much mistaken ! For at last I love
And find no satisfaction in these stones
Which, being for flesh a senseless substitute
Whilst still no means to mount beyond the flesh,
Speak nothing of the passion proven in me
As I am artist to create, beyond
Material of the world I find me in,
Expression of the wondrous mastery
That fills me : to create as I am God
For mine own truth and love's own truth alone
Not imitation but perfection of
The utterance that wells within me now.
For thus should I be (as I now am man
To woman, yearning — even whilst to woo
Intend I never ! — to attain by her

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Body's perpetuation, yea, and soul's
As bodily bequeathed), be also source
Of self-divine formation ; yea, my thought
And hers united to new heaven, new earth.

The silence that is deathly in these stones,
Fatal and mocking to my fatherhood,
Were solemn-splendid in the sweet-tongued song
I send her, first of many that shall be :
Best of the hundred hitherto to art
And man inscribed, but not to any soul !
Within the noble language as she reads
Shall the new world arise that 's ours alone,
All mine, all hers, to all eternity ;
No self-defeat in that the voice breathes not,
Moves not, lives not ; for breath nor motion, life
Were wanted any in the brain that reads
And reading re-creates. No body of me
Is falsely fashion'd in the marks I make
Of plume upon the parchment superscribed :
Nought but some symbol of the thought of sound ;
A thought itself an art beyond all sign.
The world of flesh and blood, as other men
May sense it, leaves me as the mists of Rome

MICHELANGELO

Burn from the Tiber, or the hills above
Firenze are released out of a cloud,
And all in gleam of eye is marvel-clear,
Impenetrative of the new-won sight
This love hath lent me as the sun on high.
Only, it is my soul that, learning hers,
Is sun in heaven as yet the mists beneath ;
Is song in silence, speech within my pen
Unheard but soaring as the morning soars.
For I have come to love ; and all my need
Of procreation through this flesh of space —
Focus'd, enshrined within her woman-heart
Where it is holy as the snow is white
That lieth beyond Milano (being of us both
In consonance with law and hence alive,
Breathing and moving and inform'd of soul) —
Sheds from the soul that mounteth more than man
And leaves a godhead in my song to her.
It is the art that struggled to be stone
And could not, but became monstrosity.
It is the art that, as it always fail'd,
Darken'd my brow, furrow'd my temples 'thwart
With hard perplexity, perturbing all
To vast unrest that I did labor on.

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

It is the art too late to find relea
Wholly, nor smooth the misery from my mask
Wherewith I clothe my face before the eyes
Of all men and all women else than her.
Such as I am, I am, made of mine own
Too long sojourning here about the world
A laborer to fashion flesh and blood
As none but God by His best mystery
Of woman-love unto the love of man
May fashion it in image of Himself.
I unto her may be some poet yet
Of terrible tenderness, of tragic peace
By liberation in and through her heart
From any need to prison under earth
The meaning that is beauty as I speak it
Well-order'd to the riming of my soul.
But unto men must I still play my part
So long ago assumed ; never to end
Till lean senility absorb all strength ;
And art with power to pound or patch a clay
Die as I die, the struggler, sculptor still. —
Their pigment, nay design, wherewith of late
I sop the Cerberus (I 've call'd it base
And purpose of all art !) — 't were slight to help

MICHELANGELO

Where by device of trick illusively
Is symbol'd sordid substance, substance alway.
The manual dexterity I use
Were still the undertaking ; still the form
Is space-felt, cynically aping earth
Indeed (in so far as insulting stone
With mockery of chiaroscuro and
The subtile pèrspective, so far success !)
Yet warrantable but by fact of stone
Not imitative, even, of true soul
Save through the obscuring body : and thus condemn'd,
The limning with the carving. — I for her
Am maker. For the rest I am but man.

These are my children ; still-born, struggling things
Of every gaze that chance to glance them by :
Insensates of the insensate ; Day or Night ;
Dawn yet or David ; Twilight or the God
Of Wine ; Madonna with the Child, the Dead ;
Or Moses half-hewn still within my mind.
These are my children. But mine art is song
Sentient in love of her : for her, for me :
But not for any other of them all.

MILTON

NOW am I left in mine old age with God
Alone. Blind, desolate, I still have God.
Princes and potentates they are not God.

How have I seen the great days of the earth
Like froth devour'd ; and all our hopes of strength
Made to a mock and scorn ! But still is God.
How are the evil raging ; and the wrong
Wholly triumphant through the length and breadth
Of this lost England ! Yea, but still is God.
Yet, shall the commonweal that men have lost
Be commonweal regain'd ? In God's good time
Doubtless. But here I sit at Gizeh shorn
And blind, a mockery. I sit ; and God.
Even hath my sacrifice of sight brought nought
Save bitterness : and commune close with God.
Yea, in the loss of every outward thing
Of sight and fortune, opportunity
To stir foot in God's service ; still I owe
Rich compensation, empyrean hope
Of him who stands and waits : this life in God.
Scarce might I mean with any honest heart

MILTON

(Though grief would urge it) that in just such ruin
Alone gain I the vision and the voice
To sing of Satan, Eve's and Adam's fall
Through Satan, and the splendor of God's hosts.
These seem but figure of the truth I feel
Celestial, overpowering, immense.
Scarce might I mean (though here I shrink at least
From sacrilege and stark unreverence)
How Christ I sing and man's redemption through
Him,

The second Adam — 't were but figure still
Of this best grace, this unity with God.
Nor might I mean that I in durance sitting
Sing the blind Samson, earth's most tragic man
Of men — save Samson were my very soul
Named but anew ; and thus were God within him
The true song's spirit. These I mean not ; yet
Even as those orbèd constellations and
Sun's fiery magnificence were fountain
Of mine imaginings of Satan's wars
When sight was to these eyes, so Satan's hosts
And God triumphant (truths of inward eye)
Seem but suggestion of some truth to-come
Beyond immediate vision, yet the more

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

My faith and hope, my very love of God. —
Let not the spirit flag because of age !

Somewhat it were, to search in my past faith
For signs of this awakening ; and thus
Foreshadow something of articulate truth
Reserved for later ages and a man
I know not : trace some growth, development
Of here and there some partial prophecy,
Some mutilated vision which in sum
Shall mean as I by miracle would mean.
Thus, to the task ! — I cannot well recall
Even in mine adolescence such weak years
As were not, half-unconsciously, inform'd
Of independent judgment in affairs.
And this I heed well, that, with riper days
And conscientised full maturity, I took
Firm attitude of non-conformity
In spiritual professions. If I vow'd
No vows (when learning and the studious garb
Meant clergy ; and the laity, ignorance
And wassail), 't was that something in me stirr'd
Unto revolt ; at best, unto a power
To deal direct with God and God with me,

MILTON

Brooking no intercession from a church.
Such then the key-note, non-conformity
And right of private judgment with direct
Appeal to God in Scripture and in faith.
Confirm'd in such view, I at first withdrew
For travel, study, teaching; when the times
In public life of independent thought
Demanded nought, afforded no foothold
Unto the root-and-branch reformer. Then
At the true call and in the desperate need
I labor'd earnestly and honorably
Preserving independence, unenslaved
To any project or of friends or foes:
That England might be England. When the times
Fell; and I blind and desolate am left
Alone with God; mine independence still
Is mine, my private judgment unimpeach'd
And unimpair'd. But markèdly the appeal
To God in Scripture or to God in faith
Is of a novel nature. Let me pause.

For everything that I have deem'd of God
His handiwork hath fail'd me. Mine whole world
Hath sunken and is wrack. — Did I mistake

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

God's will and purpose? Did I contradict
The express command and set my strength against
Omnipotence? Was God the God of kings
And tyrants? Nay, for kings and tyrants deem
Earth theirs, not God's; and therefore God's good care
For their good solely, and themselves in the world
God's vicars, hence in all equivalence
God upon earth. God cannot work for these.
Yet have I thus been guilty as I blame
These tyrants; I have held God partisan
For this or the other good within my soul
Or in the world; though all things else of the world
(And in my soul) no care of Providence.
Thus have I made these few things of my world
Tyrant of all else; and my soul-desires
God upon earth. God cannot work for these.
Yea, I, who brook no intercession, fain
Had interceded even as Church and Pope.
I, who have writ of Satan's tragedy
And heroism, had deem'd God's adversary
No care of God and so no truth of Him;
Though God were God but in the conquering,
And Satan very godly, who would brook
No intercession, but demanded right

MILTON

To deal direct with God and God with him.
Ay, Christ were Christly not in interceding
Where intercession were a blasphemy,
But by subduing all things of His soul
And world to godliness and Providence;
And thereby making whole His universe.
Samson were tragic, and God's spirit in him,
Scarce by the warfare (less by carnal love!)
But by the cataclysm, involving all
Alike, of God's wrath on the just or unjust;
Self, Israel's servant, even as Dagon's hosts!

Thus the new faith of mine unflagging spirit
In age as in mine earliest youth is still
A self-dependent and unswerving zeal
To deal direct with God, brooking no cant
Of customary creeds to intercede.
Yet the new independence craves some fresh
Fashion of God, Who, equally all things
Of right and wrong as I must see them, yet
Fosters the final truth in heaven's own fall.
I cannot reach the reason why some things
Of God are right and why some earth-things else
Are wrong, yet equally of God the same.

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Old faith falls from me as my sight hath fallen,
Leaving me outer darkness, the dismay
Indeed of one who sits at Gizeh shorn
And sightless ; but within, a truth of God
New : how no vilest tyrant of them all
But God is with them working still for truth ;
And how I, wielding on the just and unjust
Alike the scourge and the sustainment too
Of man's great epic of the primal sin
And final godliness, the hellish power
Of Satan and the healing power of Christ,
Am left in mine old age blind, desolate
Indeed ; alone by knowing but all in God,
God but in all ; my right, their wrong : but God !

And thus is God through me, as God through them
Fill'd of an universal hold of earth,
Though the wrong triumph. Thus my aged soul
Hath faith and dealeth still direct with God.

LEIBNIZ

WHAT uplift of the spirit in these stars !
How, in the pale dawn waxing yonder wide
And wider with each heart-beat of this breeze,
Seems each to feed on holier flame, seems star
Or fiery influence scarce to melt away
As once men dream'd, but to wax each in place ;
Remaining each a star yet each the more
Achieving sunship by the sphere's increase
Of light ! I lean from this stuff'd chamber forth ;
Some span, may be, project my brow beyond
This eastward casement ; and receive the dawn
And all dawn's wonderful significance
Into my breath and being (soul and all,
Fatigued with toil of mathematic task
The night-long !) ; soul and all receive of this
Heart-beating, breathing movement of the wind ;
And am resuscitate ; as one arisen
Out of some sepulchre I sense the truth
In new strength ; am of insight into God
More vital than my calculus : am dawn
And sunship of these stars ! Let there be light
Even in my laboring brain to clear at last

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The calculus, the monad-chaos from
All need of preassumption, overlord
Or arbitrary dawn of a sole sun !
Let the new day be stars' : sun, but a star
Self-like more largely luminous ; yet stars,
Each still a sun. Let the new problem be
Development inherent to each least
Of minimalities. Let God be soul,
Mine and each monad's equally ; no lord
Unmonadlike ex machina, beyond
The mutual scheme emptily superposed. —
How strangely rational ! Behind me heap'd
Lie year on year of labors, leading but
To subterfuge : to some absorptive dawn
Defiguring these stars, to some false-stars
Figments of fire on sun's fix'd palimpsest ;
Not sunlike systems each a dawn, not sun
Some very star but by earth nearer view'd.
Now these things melt away ; nay, wax and burst
Transfigured each to splendor of this sense
Of self-conclusiveness ! What uplift of
The spirit in this waxing of the stars !

Might I devise this new-won spirit-truth

LEIBNIZ

In terms at last of any calculus ?
How, within bounds of mathematic need
For static value, indicate for each
Minutest element a value earn'd
Of absolute position, each in self
The very problem's full infinity ?
The problem's statement were the problem
solved !

Yea, every part were function of all parts
Itself whole, yet discernibly a part
Whose definition must conclude all else.
No possibility of calculus,
Of simplification, interchange of place,
Invariant symbolism of each sign,
Convertibility in any guise
Would anywise remain ! Language must be
Self-absolute, communicatively
A mere approximation ; for no sign
Can bear one meaning in unlike contexts,
But each is all of speech ! The calculus
Would prove pure fluxion, still determinate ;
Ay, static not in any part at all
Save as each part is utterly the whole
And thus not iterable ; each, unique.

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Nor, to allege of every element
Fluxional worth wherewith to calculate
As static till, beyond the problem, by
Some strange arbitrament were value chosen,
Were to perform such operation through
The fluxion. Nay, the fluxion may not stand
For calculation-usage. Yet, save each
Be also all and thereby of itself
Intrinsically make for infinite
The problem and itself such all's inverse
Distinctively determining all quanta,
By its own standard constituting allness,
And hence incapable within the all
Of any subdivision (which would add
A multitude beyond all multitude),
Remains each least minute — minute soë'er —
Yet capable of diminution still
(Because not by its definition as
Distinctive implicating all there is)
As merely static unit capable
Of iteration, hence analysis,
Interminably further ; ay, despite
Interminable aggregation, still
Quite inexhaustive, plural : yea, in no sort

LEIBNIZ

Appropriate to last analysis
Fluxionalwise of any curvature
Save curves whose constancy functions as straight.—
Even as, were God some over-monad, strange
To monad-ideality (yea, such
False God I dream'd but yesterday), remain'd
Each individuality of men
But yet an unit, single ; and nowise
An individual, but each with each
Still interchangeable, nowise unique ;
Hence capable of subdivision still :
Some part of me, myself ; nor any part
Quite minimal enough to be myself
Beyond dispute — not that pineal gland
Of Gaul's geometrician small enough
To be the soul ! And yet the soul is all ;
Yet were each, individual ; each star
The God, the dawning also ; if beyond
All mathematic, then were calculus yet
Scarce metaphysic, scarcely adequate
To any wisdom : as scarce soul, the shape
Of atomic extent ! But soul were lift
And comprehension of yon atom-world
To morning-song, to spiritual strength

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Now more than formerly, ay, than when all
Stars sang together. Sing they now my soul !

Light breaks; each star in waxing grows a world,
A sunship and a day-strength. And my cell
Of litter'd scribblings where I turn my gaze
Is loftily illumined by these floods
Which fling from this near star, my person'd self,
Over the universe. The perfect proof
Is mine of metaphysic spirit-scheme
Which needs no God for overlord, no day
Destroying starship : as no calculus. —
The proof perfect in faith, not flawless quite
In demonstration. For this day remains
All seeming-starless to the sight. No touch
Finds godship in these limbs and aching brow ;
Which yearn and seek beyond world's monad-
scheme

The absolvent harmony I feel for false !
Oh, for fresh logic, strict as all the schools'
Yet fill'd with insight which might save my work
From waste ; some firm, well-knit concordance of
The godship with the individual
(Which, if by mere discernibility,

LEIBNIZ

Concludes distinctively all else ; is whole)
Wherein each proves each ; wherein even this false
Abstractive generality, these false
Exclusive iterative monad-points,
May stand for error, posited of truth,
Yea, proving truth by being exhausted, false !
Then might the calculus be wholly true
Not by approximation but by full
Rejection of the explicit elements
Transform'd to absolute uniqueness each :
Not now my method. Then might well my soul
Be more than mere revolt 'gainst current false
Apotheosis of that infinite
Whose emptiness of all vitality
Is held for Godhood ! Then might I be more
Than Baruch's anti-Christ: who ne'ertheless
Even in mine own despite must yet retain
The Spinozistic God of worldlessness
Beyond my monad-world. — Will such a man
Be moulded of the times to come ? Will dawn-hour
Some day be hail'd by one whose spirit faints not
Back : as my spirit faints to poring-o'er
These differentials ? One whose harmony
If preëstablish'd yet is instant still ;

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Whose apperception, if reflectively,
Yet absolutely shall conclude in each
Beyond conceivability of mere
Exclusive iteration all world else
By metaphysic beyond calculus?
Such will there be ! who shall speak loud and clear
What now I dimly feel : what now I am
Even in my perfect failure — I who now
Fulfill world-being, yea, avow my truth
Of sunship, starship by my standard set
And self-criterion — truth I fatuous
Resign for figment of the fever'd brain
Worn-out with much night-watching. —

Hail, Lord Sun !

Quencher of stars ! — Be God beyond my soul,
Leaving me space in little to reflect
His universe ! The morning is awake
Without my chamber ; from within I close
The casement, monadwise devise my world
Of calculi, of symbols representing
Type, order, law ; as God will have it : dream !

KEATS

SUCH sound as ocean only, autumn ocean,
Makes in the mellow silences my soul
And fainting strength unto this autumn hour
Respond : a murmurous, heart-upwelling lift
That bursts almost, yet bursts not ; though at last
Someway is gone, back-lost into the void ;
Gone, with indrawing, gasp and sob. The drift
And cast things scarce are troubled ; and the voice
Nowhere is firm nor forceful ; yet the depth
And length and breadth of all, that in this hour
Seems vital, suffers, agonizes, yea,
To make respond, make feel, this stubborn shore
Sea's tragedy of mute omnipotence.

It is the tragedy of aging world
And of my young indomitable soul
That bursts almost in singing, sings not quite
The strong song of the sea when strand and wave
Are one white turmoil. For I fail from strength
By uttermost inception ; as this sea,
Too plastic to the impulse, yields along
Its length and breadth and through the depths of it

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Unto its own compulsion ; and is lost. —
Had I the power of rock, to sing yet feel not !
Yea, when the wave beats on me, to be voice !

For now I meditate a song of songs :
Of how the early gods in tragedy
Of mute omnipotence were all unmade
By too divine inception. And the song
Fails from denoting earth and men and Zeus
For new and nobler Saturn ; but betrays
A sad indrawing, backward sob and loss
With Saturn's downfall, leaves the old god there
Undone : for too divine inception of
His piteous destiny. — Would that my soul
Might sing the song of Zeus, Saturn anew
Made godlier by community with men !
Would that my song might be Hyperion ! —
Would that my soul might burst and find its voice !

Almost 't is so, 't is well-nigh vocal with
The insight of this tragedy of mute
Omnipotence. The year will soon be worn
Out of this impotence, be autumn sprung
Unto ripe power of winter. And this soul,

KEATS

Released of too swift sensibility,
Too much of apprehension, freed and fair
From Rome be journeying with song at last
Because of utterance through death. — But now
I sit by this dead northern autumn shore :
An autumn and an ocean I, a world
Of mute omnipotence. And in myself
I hear the lifting swell, the almost burst,
The sob of all-indrawing ; yea, such sound
As ocean, autumn ocean, makes among
The drift things and the cast stones of the shore.

SHELLEY

PEACE be to mine inquietude of spirit,
Its fever and its fierce improvidence
Of utterance, and petulance of heart.
Peace now be unto me and let me be
(Alastor-like and as Prometheus' end!)
All-permeative of this peace-fill'd hour.
Let Islam sleep now with the sleeping Keats.
Let me be, with the saturating strength
Of this firm wind, beyond dejection fill'd
By noon-tide and the blue, by sea and sky :
Stout with its streaming yet be tranquil too,
As o'er these pine-tops, for incessant speed.
Let the west wind blow power and not dismay.
For I am as the mountains and the sea
A solemn purport ; if a cloud, no more
Of lightning nor of deluge. But I stand
Steep'd in the breathing of this atmosphere
That moves and yet is mighty but by peace. —
Yon lies the bark well-nigh prepared to cruise
By this sweet coast ; and warm trans-Spezian breezes
To bless us and refresh with blue and breath
Of the pristine hyaline. I'll sit me here

SHELLEY

Awhile till all is trim-set ; and renew
Conscience of this that I have lived and been.
For presage is (as yon high-toppling cloud
At sail that swells aloft in the noon light
So white and whelming, angel of this gulf's
Eternal involution sea with sky !) —
For presage is of some high change in me
Which swells and waxes overweening with
My yearning to embark and be, one season,
Some firmer, wiser, holier than myself
In unimpeded and direct commune
With passion which is not rash inequity,
With irresistible force which yet is full
Of calmest beauty, sane and utterly
True to a self-containment and a quiet
Which ne'er was mine. Can beauty be aught else
Than peace, whate'er of outward stress enshrine
Its poise, its logic and its dignity ?

For flame-like I have tower'd above the ground
On wing and wild song as the lark ascending
And seen in vision what these eyes of earth
Had never seen ; but to the face of earth,
Its comfort and its vast inspiring, been

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

As blind. Shadow and shine have swept through earth
And I known nought for towering sunward still.
(And yet, to tower and be but earth-born more
By every sun-pulse ! To be cloud in truth :
Or pine-tree yonder, rooted even as branch'd !)
Thus, have I not transcended every hue
Of nature or of humankind to give
To each thing somewhat of a mystery,
Phantasm and image of its proper shape
Projected rainbow-wise, but no true gleam
Of the earth-paradise I named yet knew not ?
Have not I made sweet mouthings of the scents
And sounds beneath, above, beyond me here —
Only to question still, and speak nowise
Inherent beauties, the conclusive self
Of each that is a conscience even in mine ?
I, of all earth enamor'd, yet have said :
'There is no God ' ; and have my god of love
In cloud-shadow and sunshine nowhere found,
For ignorance that his right form and face
Are in me, therefore in the least of these.
Him I have call'd no personal deity
But some all-power ; and yet have furbish'd forth
Him in the fancied Eros of an age

SHELLEY

When all-power spake not nor was known of men,
Thus yielding some false-person and no god.
Yet if an all-power of this human soul
Be known and be my substance (as being known
Implies such self-conclusion), shall I seek
Beyond the form and function of this scene
In mine imagining of its wild peace
To prove the person of its deity
In this my person and in each of these
Who individually each may know
(By sentience and by insight occupying
Function and form of any other here)
A meaning to the name and deed of love ?
How have I lived in love and never known it ;
But sought beyond, above ; bewailing all
Which actuality might offer ; even
When most adorning these, then most denying
The personal godhead of their naked fact !

Yet see, I stretch my touch forth but to feel
This staggering pine that, stalwart to the breeze,
Stands world-aware ; and am, by his ripe pulse,
Person of pine-stuff ; I am he — nowise
By metaphor, by no sham allegory

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

But by my conscious occupation of
His form and function as he holdeth mine —
Each in his self-respective poise, one passion
Of cosmic intermingling. Yea, how else
Aver that I be poet and he pine
Save that I am, in true imagining
Of insight, pine-sap and pine-pristine strength ;
As he in pine-sort and in pine-degree
(Defined as my best science may define it)
In vegetative majesty likewise
Poet-partaker in my humanhood ?
That I have written in early years how all
Of earth's subhuman yet were human-like
Aware and loving, man in less degree
And soul-fill'd somewise : such a simpler creed
Missing the true soul-intropermeance
(Which guarantees distinctive quality
To each partaker in the polar pact)
Might scarce protect from feverish petulance
Even one like me untamed to downright thought
Nor stern consistence and articulation
Of intellectual process. For I felt
The meaning ; yet was tortured, driven to mad
Evasion of this cosmic universe

SHELLEY

Of sane interdependence fact with fact :
Felt merely ; fretted, utterly debarr'd
From logic's satisfaction : found not peace
In picturing mystery beneath (an earth
Sentient anthropomorphically) and
A phantasm, overhuman though none less
Anthropomorphic, unreal, inane ! —
Such still the conceit of this unquiet screed
Which, 'spite these firm winds and insistent
 stems,
These toppling clouds of earth-inwoven weight,
I 'mid the bosom of yon Apennines.
Scrawl'd late, of figures dark for flood of light,
Wan shapes in chariots hurtling through those
 throngs
Of earth's unburied and unburiabie
Ghost-things of Sheol ; and their rout was all
A pageantry, a symbol — and I ceased
Still with no substance — ay : 'What, then, is
 Life ? ' —
Such question can be answer'd by no creed
Of fantasy and ghoul's of humankind
Peopling no space, else peopling spaces where
Are other lives and nurtures still ignored.

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Such creed pursues peace of a breathless chase
Hot-hearted, nor knoweth how insistency
Of unfantastic insight, the pure touch
Of pine or strong wind as the pine or wind
Is most itself, such touch on palm or brow
Solves the enigma, yields a perfect peace
Of intropermeation still more sure
With every pulse of passion ! — Such is Life. —

Alastor lives not nor Prometheus ;
Keats is eternal memory, nought else.
Yet am I here of this eternity
Call'd cognizance, my conscience, ay, of each
As each is ; cognizance in every touch
Strengthen'd by passing ever on, and aye
Evolving ; which, involving all of earth
And ocean, sky and shadow, sun or soul,
Is spirit : and needs not work by witchery.
Such strength, being self-contain'd, stays temper-
ate too
And provident in every utterance. —
Let this communing be my first of hymns
To Beauty intellectually sane
And worth the dedication of a life

SHELLEY

In peace as was not hitherto vouchsafed :
A Beauty which is common deity.

They call. The bark invites me to new life.
Though yon cloud burst, what boots it? It hath
been.

HEGEL

IN reference to Christ, the 'Christian claim
'To Godhood of a single man' ? Would I
'Who speak of God as of an Absolute
'Be acquiescent to enroll myself
'Christ-follower or no ?' — A subtlety
I fain would answer by a subtler still !
The correspondence, friend, between us two
Stands dignified, ennobled by the zeal
With which thou seekest truth. To thee alone
(And this shall clarify, yea, new-define
What save for thee remain'd in me obscure
And stale) I may discriminate the true
From false with literal judgment, feeling firm
Reliance in thine own discriminative
Interpretation. And I hold the point
Of best, most fruitful attitude toward Christ
Perchance a moot one ; still not wisely solved
Unless with due regard for audience,
For chance to be interpreted aright.
Thus, for the mass of those my discipline
Holds sway with, might there be a dangerous drift
Of radical, even atheistic, rant

HEGEL

In misinterpretation of my terms ;
Else, haply, an unspiritual ipsism ;
Spake I with uttermost unbosoming.
In manuscript or volume thou wilt find,
Save this, no rigid-wrought examining
Of Christ and Christian in their present worth
As creeds for ripe truth-seeking : save in this
The which when well-digested (and, if need,
Refuted, friend) I charge thee straight destroy
Out of men's sight. The times are not yet ripe
Save only mine and thine. — For, know, the scheme
Of truth develops in men's absolute mind
With grade from false toward true ; the foregone truth
Turn'd false, the truth to-come not yet ripe truth
Save for those souls elaborate beyond
The mean elaboration of men's souls.
Christ's truth for Christ might well be true, if still
By logic in the sequel shown now false.

(And first, the figment of presumptuousness
In thee or me or Christ or any spirit
Needs no consideration. Where the truth
Is spoken, acted, lived, attains itself
Expression, no presumptuousness hath place —

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

God or no God ; Christ, I or thou proved God ;
Were utmost reverence — a becoming self-
Scrutinization of one's absolute mind :
If only proof be diligently firm
Nor words be wasted in avoiding proof.)

In brief, then, friend, thy question might be put :
What bearing were of Christ and Christ's God-claim
In Christian creed, to my well-reason'd system
Of absolute spirit in its self-defined
Intrinsic involution of itself ?
The claim of Christ well known and well avouch'd
Were personal divinity — if not
Divinity of self as merely man,
Yet in some sort divineness of the man —
Not obviously made for nor applied
To any man save Christ of all mankind.
Thus in a general acceptance Christ
Means claim to Godship of some single man
As man, though not of other single men.
Remains the choice (admitting absoluteness
For philosophic postulate approved)
'Twixt this and others of that triune scheme
Which dominates all thought — this realism

HEGEL

And those the mystic and the spiritual
In dialectic — these : divinity
Of general mankind and only so
Of any as each might be held alone
An instance of the Platonistic type ;
Or, otherwise, of every man as self
In absolute sense ; and therefore all mankind
Divine, alone by virtue of each Godhood
(Though these as God are utterly at one)
Collectively arraign'd. And of this last
Might Christ without distortion seem to speak
When purged of metaphor in passages
Which place believers as his brethren in
The Father's household whereof he is chief.
(But more of this anon.) For mine own part
My teaching at first sight might seem to urge
Divinity of general mankind
(The mystic among these hypotheses)
Not of a special person, whether Christ
Or thee or me or any of them all.
And I have seem'd, for mere conformity
To general prepossession, to except
Christ from the rule and still acknowledge him.
Are these two views compatible ? — I scarce

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(For teaching's sake in my timidity
Of misinterpretation — nay, how strange
In most men's eyes, from the truth-champion
Such compromise-confession !) thus have sought
Exact discrimination hitherto
Between these views. Posterity will find
Choice of interpretations ; nothing shown
In any work of mine to guide the choice
'Twixt general humanity, else Christ.
Now for the subtlety, the fresh-defined
Elaboration of this absolute soul
To new discrimination. Times shall be
When this must be attempted 'fore all men
For teaching's sake ; but times are not yet ripe
Save mine and thine. Destroy this screed ; I fear
False-witness by the general mistaking
Of that I have to offer thee alone.
For Christ the self-assertion would suffice
(If Christ be God ; and God, no person else)
Without communication to men else ;
For general assertion of mankind's
Genus and thus divinity, must one
Proclaim upon the house-tops truths no ear
(If absolute truth be not of any person)

HEGEL

Could comprehend nor any tongue proclaim ;
For the new subtlety shall I and thou
Suffice for self, for Christ, for all mankind !
'T will out, in its ripe time of absolute truth ;
If not (as in the sequel shown) by force
Of general system, yet by interplay
Of men's mind-absolute : as mine and thine.

To criticise the current Christ-idea : —
'T is well compatible with absolutism
That one might claim rights of an absolute,
Identity with fatherhood, a sonship
Yet uncreate. In so far as did Christ
Mean Christ's own personal divinity
Stands the conception philosophic, proven
By merest spiritual rights of self.
And such claim were consistent equally
As fundamental postulate within
Each of these three schemes of alternative
'Godship'. Were Christ the sole God, were mankind
God and we functions, were each man as self
A Godship and conclusive each of all,
On either of these three hypotheses
Might Christ proclaim : 'I and the Fatherhood

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

'Are one'. I thus accept fully in form
Christ's claim to be divine. The problem lies
In practical interpretation: whether
Christ's Godship can exclude men else from God;
Or if Christ's Godship merely means a right
As instance of a godly type which, though
Alleged for self-defining, scarce allows
Unless by metaphor that any man
Is wholly godly; or if Christ concludes
A system of divine Christ-absolutes,
Call'd men, conclusive each of all. And so
Grant we the Christ-claim. Can it, then, preclude,
As in the popular acceptance, rights
Of Godship in disciples, scribes, ourselves?
At first thought one would yield: In this duplex
Coincidence of Godship, the All-One,
With man, the One-of-All, must such a truth
Be single in each aspect; God being one,
Must God's coincident and antipode
Be likewise one. (Though opposite of one
Were multitude?) Such is the Christian creed,
Which shunning ipsism must assign to Christ
The single God-antipodean share
In universal Godship. But at once

HEGEL

Asserts the paradox: If God be whole
And yet coincident with finitude,
Then finitude unto the all-divine
Is somewhat, is of rights; and, being not-God,
Must either oppositely-coincide
Else limit very Godship. And this last
Conceit of limitation stands debarr'd
By very concept of an absolute.
Hence, if the Christ be God (and God someway
Must man-define Himself, else scarce were God
As man's world is concern'd), can no man be
Excluded from such Godship as is Christ's.
The realism of the 'thou not I'
(Of Christ, though not ourselves, for very God)
Stands utterly refuted by the truth
That God and Christ, who ne'ertheless were man,
Are one. And hence suggests the mysticism,
The doctrine of a God-in-general
Wherein we share, whereof are instances
Thou, I, or Christ alike; but neither one
Divine as person still. Will this prove truth?

And here my teaching plausibly might be
Supposed to halt: Granting the Christ-divine,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Then general humanity were God ;
And each were instance, none yet utterly
A Godhood. Yet I hold and now propound
A system more consistent with the truth
That opposite-coincidence inheres
'Twixt God and finitude as shown (indeed
By utmost logic ; and for faith) by Christ.
For, lo ! the God, even though generalized
Must (else the self-defining Absolute
Were nought ; else Plato, ay, and Aristotle
Abundantly arrived at truth in holding
The species, the particular, related
To its own type and thus, though ' mystically '
Identical, realistically still
Delimiting the universal !) must
The opposite-coincidence inhere
Of type with instances : no type conceived
Except of instances. Wherefore to cite
A general humanity must mean
Not a conceptually severable
Entity which may or may not have such
And such a realization, and remains
Itself regardless of each special case ;
Yet somewhat which hath definition but

HEGEL

In so far as defined in cases, each
Contributing a definition, yea,
Uniquely other than such type-defined
Of any group or instances beside.
Thus a determinate 'in-general'
Inheres but to each instance and were else
Nothing in general because defined
By no self-instances but limited
By facts : and universalness debarr'd.
Wherefore, when Christ's claim reads : Each man
 of all
Is Godhood by the general intent
Of each to oppositely-coincide
With infiniteness ; shows that finitude
(Which, by its single self-defining, posits
All men as system-members each in place
Distinct, unique, non-interchangeable)
Determinate when conceived as from the stand
Of each determinant ; each man of all :
Self-totalizing, universal, God
Even by finally contributing
Of God-the-One an unique worldlihood
Which were not otherwise coincident
With God, nor God's in any sort as world.

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Wherefore the general humanity
Is genuine, actual, definable
Only if I, thou, Christ or each alike
Is absolute Godhood : none excluding aught
From ultimate divinity ; and yet
No Godhood independently conceived
Regardless of the character and truth
Of each-and-each man as each lives and breathes ;
And God, God, but by God-proved-very-man.

Friend, is the subtlety appreciable ?
Note the nice demarkation. This were no
Plurality anthropologic of
Greek superhumans who are merely men
Made men immoderate and impossible.
No multiplicity of God as God
Inheres to true finite-coincidence.
For, even as the God is infinite
In each, and only infinite at all
By utterly unique discrimination
Of man from man, yet even this infinite
Of each, being total, is the same in each,
And, being the same, is just the unique God
The more discriminately by each new

HEGEL

Recomplication through this universe.
Christ is the God, I am the God, and thou
And each of any, not by being alone
Singly some God ; nor yet by instancing
A general identity defined
In some mere mysticism quite apart
From actual definition in its facts ;
But each by being discriminately one
Of many unique others (' house ' among
The ' Father's many mansions ') only so
Insistently by very virtue of
An irreducible distinctiveness
Defining all else each as each and so
A total, universe, each in its best
Discrimination ; each as self thus God :
The God ; and there is never God beside.

Thus is the scheme of absoluteness shown
An actual affair of thee and me
Even as of Christ in Christ's good hour of life ;
Of each man in his hour of noblest strength.
Whence follow many doctrines strange to thought
In present days : how ' freedom ' were this sense
Of utter world-conclusion through each act

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(Howe'er in other view necessitated)
Firmly discriminative judgmentwise ;
Not by mere choice (delimiting the soul
Even by the rejected act-alternative)
But by will-insight thus coincident
With the compulsion : how mortality
Were by the absolute coincidence
Not stale-perpetuated day by day
Through soul-migration nor through influences
Of works and wisdom on succeeding men,
But, through the eternity of each least act
As new-defining every act of all,
Immortal to itself, beyond all death ;
Though none the less this flesh-mortality. —
Thus in this brief, my supreme act of judgment
Uncompromisingly discriminant
Of multiple meanings, postulates my spirit
Unto itself an immortality,
A freedom and a Godhood. Friend, I thank thee. —
Judge if I be Christ-follower or no !

EMERSON

THIS quiet Concord to mine indolent thought
Hath long been inspiration, but to-day
Shows limitation, faileth to attain
Sufficient dignity to ape man's soul.
Nature hath been my spirit's resting-place
To pass in pleasance 'twixt the banks of God
The safeguard, the immutable firm truth.
I have been as this river slothfulwise
Allowing alteration toward the sea
Yet scarce conceiving doubt of the green land.
To-day 't is different. I return to-day
(Here in my hand a book disquieting
Writ of one lately dead whom 'live I knew not)
To this my shady station o'er the stream
Not still as homeward to the heart of things
But strangely, skeptic of the sweet wide scene
Its amplitude to satisfy the soul
Fit for horizons that enshrine no truth
Taboo'd beyond an inmost scrutiny.
Mine is emancipation from all creed
To-day : no citizen I of earth, no scion
Of fiat, no member of multocracy ;

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Just by mine effort to establish truth,
Create world-system and autocracy —
Yea, no disciple even of this one dead
Whose work I find so faith-disquieting !
Whatever be there of an Over-Soul
Without my soul must prove its right to-day
To credence, must establish as my banks
The bounds and conduits of a private power
Else universal in and of myself.
To-day primarily I am myself :
If also soul, how then were soul aught else ?

The doubt were doubtless unintelligible
To any save myself, yea, unto me
In any mood save mine upon this morn :
Disturb'd if not enlighten'd, deeply stirr'd
And troubled by the witness of this man.
He speaks not plainly, seems almost with me
To need some over-lord, yet ne'ertheless
Attempts a system of distinctive things
Self-unified without amalgamance —
Unlike the mergence in mine over-soul.
I have announced divinity that seem'd
While overarching and enshrining soul

EMERSON

To liberate, infinitize the man.
And so have friends interpreted the faith
With satisfaction. I alone demur.
For, lo, the liberation seems to prove
But novel Platonism, like the Greek's
A leveling to Rome's democracy :
A substitution of the legal right,
As each is man, for world-self moralism ;
As one is all, for all-conclusiveness
Of universe unto each self unique.
For, if an Over-Soul (which may not owe
Relations various, but were thus finite
Being incomplete in each) communeth with
All men alike, were every man alike
Equal in insight of the absolute truth ;
Each person (if no longer atomized
As in the Stoic schema ; yea, though lifted
To bland fatuity of the perfect State)
Unit equivalent, indifferent
(Brahmanic, if not quite Christ-like, mysticism)
I or the thief, yea, man even or the beast —
Incapable all of value ; scions all
Of blank arbitrament, authority
And fiat beyond reason : worth ruled out

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

With any judgment of morality,
With any quality of each-not-each.
That yonder bird sings with a meaning made
Birdwise, unlike the meaning of my songs,
Is ultimate distinction. I may sing
Wood-notes, may wonderfully feel in me
Response unto yon woodland rhapsodizing ;
The ultimate discrimination may
Be overlaid with what one will of rich
Mysterious insight of the neighbor-need.
Yet am I still not nature ; no divine
Absorbent mingleth mine with other persons
As I here stand and saturate a world
(Even as this Hegel hath his hold on me)
With thought unthought of any other man :
Suggested yet nowise put forth of him.
The Indic myth and Maia were scarce mine own —
More than did Plato so intend his truth.
Yet Plato fail'd with his high poetizing
To speak an unambiguous truth to mine.
In him lay seeds of blank indifferences
Which cropp'd with ripening of Lucretian moods
To self-despair. I must assure mine own
Ecstatic insight of the whole divine

EMERSON

Against deintegration. For the truth
Must hold some system of this earth to-day,
Of me and men and yonder murmuring stream
Unsame in attribute as if no God
Were immanent nor any whole inhered.
Nor will identity of generic terms
In attribution vouchsafe sameness to them
Save genus-substance be some Over-Soul! —
Relinquishing no truth which I have grasp'd
Of immanence, how save the hierarchy
Of them and me from mergence in the mob
Of monad-puppets, equally of God
Indeed; but, being indifferent, hence inane?
The green land flows within itself; the sea
Is image of the unresting alterance
Of all things; even this quiet Concord shows
Passage but by appreciation (ay,
Contrast in speed or kind of passage) scarce
By any standard of unchanging earth.
How save the soul from Heraclitus' flux,
Pure finitude plausible to no sense
Of some morality: relationship
Responsible beyond the moment-man,
Inherent yet to him? How save this shore

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Whereon I stand ; how prove within myself
Judgment of speed nor kind of passage, ay,
Assurance even of this quiet stream,
This indolent land, this sea toward which all tend
As type and image ? Were we sheer distinct,
Pure flux and passing, then were we but the more
Self-imperceptible, alike inane.
And thus would this voice in these pages prove it,
Essaying if scarce comprehensibly
A static continuity through all-time,
An immanent eternity in change. —
There shall be soul though Soul may be no more
An over-world nor mere infinity.
Someway shall I perceive the stream doth move
Though Zeno, though Spinoza, though myself
Have proven a motion all impossible.

Someway the stream doth move and is by motion
An inspiration, still a type to-day
Of mine own nature-born morality.
The hour of this Hegel in my heart hath come
To beat beyond the master by some hint
In him contain'd : no over-immanence
In anywise infinitizing, save

EMERSON

The soul reside in, be, the moving man's
Irreconcilable discrimination
From each and all things else that make his world!
Such were a system of this earth to-day ;
The intimate necessity of each
For definition, self-determinance,
Requiring every other each in place
And character determinate thereby.
For thus might I establish of myself
An universe, be as I boast divine.
Thus might I, as best insight of mine earth,
Admit each unto his divinity
Of world-establishment ; each person thus
Concluded of my system : thus alone
Conclusive each and equally divine.
Nor might another schema so provide
System sans all hiatus ; this of all,
Appropriately to mine otherness
From every item of mine earth to-day,
Affording godship unto each and each
Neither as units of plurocracy
Nor yet as emptiness, Brahmanic void.
The dialectic were superfluous
In pettier detail. All the soul doth need

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

For self-establishment were just the need
Of each for each, within its actual place
Thereby defined, thereby concluding all
In individuals each determinate :
Each individual determinately
An universe, conclusive, spiritual.
Or mind or matter may within the spirit
Be truthfulest ; but both are immanent
Each truth in sort : ' mind ', as I feel my world
A soul-establishment, germane to self ;
' Matter ', as that same world concludeth me
And so hath semblance of an outward thing
Compulsive and beyond my private power.
But world is my determinative self
At growth, at dialectic if you will,
Yet absolute through all sans over-lord.
The problem of such time-eternal soul
Were manifold, a process scarce for me
To formulate, though hinted of him here —
This Hegel who has work'd within me now.
I for an hour have grasp'd the great insight,
Have given it speech within my heart : a system
Of earth as earth is, spiritual, self-contain'd
Yet nowise naked of variety :

EMERSON

A system, self-containment which is beauty,
The beauty that my creed hath wholly miss'd. —
Thus doth my quiet Concord keep its flow
In varying, determinate contrast
With this green land. And thus are land and sky
Still fitly pictured from my station here
Whose sweet familiarity of view
Fills an horizon proven my very soul
Replete with meaning for my daily thought
Now sanction'd beyond stain of indolence. —
Thus am I risen through nature unto God.

WORDSWORTH

IT is a world serenely white ; a sky,
Whence snow hath lately fallen, palest blue.
And only where some craggy fell uprears
Too steep a slope for crystal covering
Doth earth show anywhere unto the sky
Its customary face. Save for yon bluff
Of perpendicular uprise seems world
No mortal struggling ; but undying peace
Spread dedicate to God. And I, alone
Of this high-moulded summit, like some cloud,
Of which God's heaven were the home, find here
A place not unlike home, a station'd rest
Unto my soul, whence earth, mine earth and God's,
Spreads patently a picture of the truth
Of life immortal.

Yet yon scraggs none less
Are earth's, are God's ; and seem eternally
At struggling ; mortal by their every move
And wasting ; as, save for this snow-of-an-hour,
This covering of a momentary creed,
Were earth all struggling up unto the clouds
Which, sea-begotten, bear unto these hills

WORDSWORTH

Oblivion but scarce serenity. —

What were that immortality of labor

Which must be earth's ; and, being earth's, be God's

And mine ; which, snowless, peaceless, yet were some

Sufficient satisfaction to the soul ?

A growth, a flowering of these grassy fells

When the high sun is quickening, and meanwhile

A waiting, patient and expectant thus

Not for this simulated peace of pure

Pale sky and sheeted snow, but for those laws

Which in the course of God's diurnal year

Make snow, as rain and sun, by wear and wash,

Frost-wrench and tempest-wrack, to quicken earth

Sea-born and struggling ? — Is there any peace ?

Lo ! I have dream'd of life-immortal as

A peace ; and came, to brood over these snows

As o'er a world not stale and customary

In mystic ecstasy. But now I see

No mere peace here ; no immortality

Of form and function, yet no worker in it ;

Of pale Nirvana, heaven beyond a world ;

Rather, some heaven's-own substance, yea, sea-born

And struggling, fallen over earth's scarr'd face

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

To soften, not conceal, suggest, not cover
From understanding and intelligence,
The peace and immortality, the presence
Of God within His world and each of us
As each is worker and his works have life :
Despite all momentary creed of life
Beyond the grave and God beyond His world ;
A symbol of the eternity in time,
Each moment, even conclusive of times all :
Yea, of the wonder of accustom'd things. —
Thus turn I and descend ; take up mine earth
Anew, cured of the mystic quietism.
Thus take I up the task with eye indeed
Uplift unto these mountains whence hath come
This help, ennobling labor and the strife
Of serious contemplations. For each task
I sense for some stage of the strenuous soul's
Good growth in wisdom, never ceasing, not
One instant to be wholly overlaid
By any snow-oblivion ; but where rear'd
Aloft, distinct and startling, there most meant
Of every cloud-wrack, every fog o' the sea,
As even of each intervale and glen
Snow-sleeping. I descend ; but learn each task

WORDSWORTH

Serene but by insistent earnestness ;
Eternal by an infinite influence
Essential in the task, not born of it ;
An absolute inference, divinely high,
Wide, deep and strong through all God's elsewhere
tasks
Of earth and men. And thus a task of God
Immortal and appropriate to peace.

THOREAU

THOUGH scant ten furlongs here from human home,
Here are there creatures only of the wood :
Now with the coming of the fall's first frost
As not whilst man moved in the summer fields
Am I alone anthropomorphic here. —

Scarce sign from any beast hath been since dusk
Closed in around. No sound from world without me
Save wash of the glimmering lonely lake with cry
Of far-off loon more lonely, or the surge
Of wind in the trees ; and constant crackle, flap
Of the camp-fire flame. The half-moon waxing
sweeps

Westward ; the stars, Orion following on,
Pass o'er me : me alone with my fed flame.
For this is an espousal of the woods :
I and primordial fire at last alone. —

Once had I desire of better bridal. But
'T was contrary decreed. And I am wed
To these alone, I mateless of my kind ;
I fronted by the problem — is it of God,
That mutual insight men may best name Love ? —

THOREAU

Of mates inanimate — a divine of Nature,
But no divinity of human kind !
I sole anthropomorphic ; and my God
Of daily human help to me denied.
The question is if God, denied to me
In social longings toward my nobler kind,
Be God, be yet divine here as of these :
Whether love's insight be of beast and branch
Admissibly as seems for me ordain'd.
The question might not come upon a man
Whose marvelous desire of marriage might
Attain fulfillment : that the social strength
Might daily, hourly wed with social strength
Of insight and perception similar
And thus might learn world-sanctity of both
By individuation (heart with heart
In the union) soul from soul — the humane God !
I had built altars to the humane God,
Had ne'er been stoical, aloof, remote
As now : I was not born the cynic — but
Now is it come upon me by my fate
And must be met alone by me of men
(Not openly in works I make for men)
Unto myself and for the saving of

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

My universe by me possess'd alone,
And of my heart which only earth may hold.
How feel divinity of me and mine
Denied the prime anthropomorphic truth
Of mutual insight mutually defined ? —
I am then mated with primordial flame,
A creature of the woods, a beast, a branch
Whilst none less human. Is such life divine ?

I may not find in this primordial flame,
These dim sky-neighboring tree-tops, nor the stars
Nor painted moon, nor these ensanguined leaves
Of the flickering fire-lit circle, that intent
Of mutual recognition, divination
Which in the hold of human heart in heart
Directly meaneth God and tells of Him
Transcendent wholeness of the immediate soul.
My spirit, yea, so much more than comprehends
The pitiful simplicity of these
('Soe'er complex to mere analysis !),
Is still so much alone beyond their strength
Of social sympathy that I must needs
Deny of these direct associates
The marks indicative of self-sublime

THOREAU

Spirituality, of reverence

Unto my soul acclaiming them its own.

These are not-mine because they know not me

Nor feel me more than as some clod of earth,

Some miasm or some wandering holocaust,

Some dread, some danger and some death to them

Uncomprehended in the workings of

Its untoward power. Such is a man to these,

If he be aught at all ; not known as man

But as a beast, a branch (ay, mischief-working)

Resourceful over any, but not in kind

Anthropomorphic as I know my power.

Unto a life uncognizant of man

I cannot yield the title of divine —

'Soe'er outspread to stellar systems, though

In mine own sight of generality

I be as nought within its size and strength

As I am clod — such world were godless still.

No Nature can be God. May I a man

Shorn of God-kinship sink to atheism,

Yield me unto the truth of earth and these ?

I doubt me if such godlessness be truth,

Or earth, as such earth-fact, be fact at all !



POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Earth may, as I, within and for itself
In each least detail mean an universe
Similar in a spirituality
Minuter merely, in a self-detail
Less complex in recomplication, yet
Entire, so whole, divine, wherein my manhood
Finds plain acceptance as I, being a clod,
Am clod-wise spiritual and enshrined of these ?
Yea, in the subtler scheme this difference
Of fact anthropomorphic from the fact
Vegetal, chemical (distinction final
And therefore perfecting, requiring all
Distinguish'd facts for definition of
Each intimate essence), yea, were final proof
In either sort respectively of earth's
As even of man's conclusive personal scope
Of consciousness interminable, each —
Within its absolute series qualitative —
So guaranteed fulfill'd omniscience.
I then am godly by my recognition
In sympathetic insight not alone
Of personalities so similar
As like for like for my faith to return
But herein and more widely, readily

THOREAU

By insight of an earth whose term distinct
As otherwise than mine I yet acknowledge
A sympathy, an active interest
Creatively, which mine creator-wise
Must reconstruct to realize at all.
So either way, by bridal or by espousal
Even of the flame primordial, world and I
Detect a fundament, simplicity
Of reconciliation, self-support
In mutual antithesis reclaim'd.
So I alone anthropomorphic here
Am godly though my God no more may be
Anthropomorphic ; though this earth of beast
And branch and fed fire and the stars on high
Be neither earth nor star as men have dream'd
Condemning them to clodliness unsoul'd
As man they fancied alone worthy God !

Such have I learn'd by biding but apart
A moment, some few furlongs from my kind
As, fate commanding, hath my spirit craved
Toward learning new God in default of old.
The Deity I learn of wilderness
Were scarce the deity of human home

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Secrete from wilderness. For man 'mid man
Associate in clanship and in creeds
Ecclesiastic seeth but with an eye
Sole to man's interest at the best, denying
All rights and interests of his weaker kind
(And thus denying much of man's own soul !)
Unrecognized for kith and kin through God,
Through contrast and through insight each in sort.
Lo ! my desire of marriage, once fulfill'd
(Save she my mate anthropomorphic had
With me espoused the fire primordial here !)
Had barr'd my spirit forever from the truth
Of God the uttermost entirety
(By characteristic quality absolute)
Of each world-system : each yet infinite
Because, within itself, from other selves
Interminably distinctive through the whole
Of star-stuffs, earth and beasts and branches each
Anthropomorphic only as my heart
Of man is soul beyond such lesser souls,
More complicate of quality, more God.
Yet thus are the creatures of the forest godly
As I ; and God, that insight best call'd Love,
Immanent in us all, as each is nowise

THOREAU

Other and thus defineth self by each. —
I had desire of better bridal, but
'T was contrary decreed. And I at last
Acknowledge Nature and am not alone ;
Am cynic never, and still dedicating
My work to man, yea, though aloof, remote.
Yet, had I wedded, haply then through her
Some inward soul-distinction had been seen
More intimate : more marking me as man
Above not-man ; more marking Truth for God ?

BROWNING

STRANGE, sudden, startling, that my book should
be

‘Proven belovèd, demonstrably held
‘At heart’s core of the cultured ; popular
‘Of the public’. Ay, my publishers ‘besieged
‘For reprints’.—Here, these scribblings from the
post

Fervent, frenetic ; yea, as utterly
Super-appreciative, wide of the mark
Of a just estimate, as hitherto
In complementary infelicities
My critics crush’d me. Had I done those things
Men cursed me for, this craziness had come
Scarce sooner. Had I left but more undone
The things they condescendingly approve
Should I adopt them mine, still had I held
Inviolable my private sanctity
Of sure self-judgment ; nor been overwhelm’d
With this effusiveness. — ’T is all well meant,
Doubtless. ’T is yet distressingly apart .
From principles of poetry and strength.
While it was scorn, I could work dogged-wise

BROWNING

In equipoise ; sad that my verse should be
Miscomprehended ; certain none the less
That nor miscomprehension, nor the laws
They arrogantly promulgated might
Alter one whit the care-felt speech of soul
I seriously expatiated. Now
That somewhat of my soul hath seriously
Touch'd them, 't is well, 't is justified : but yet
Shakes it the equipoise. For I must see
Equal miscomprehension ; sense how few
Of all these sympathizers rightly feel
True trend and purport of my poems. So
Stand I alone ; not as before in sort
To champion, urge consideration for
A genuine intention — so proceed
In work's assurance to redoubling work —
But to be deprecator, advocate
Of sterner estimate ; to work, if work
At all, in self-distrust, decrimal of
Inmost endeavoring. Now must I sit
Idle awhile, now that success has come
Half-sought, to buffet back these waves that would
Wash out the individual estimate
In general, blind, emotive, judgmentless

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Alleged community. Now must I weigh
As ne'er before the meaning of my mind.

For I have from the first found tendency
In all my verse toward individualism
In a new manner. And 't were pertinent
To my art-form were mine art-judgment quite
Apart from critical tradition, sure
Of self-criteria which yet should not be
Eccentric nor beyond most views of men
Unbalanced from an average estimate.
I have thresh'd o'er and o'er within my brain
Suggestions of insanity, have sought
A thousand times discern incipient marks
Of my diseased departure from the sense
Of most of the cultured ; ay, when differing
In personal opinion have I sought
More keenly than best critic of them all
So to detect opinion which might show
No reasonable warrant, as to catch
My judgment obviously wanton ; still
Have by the skepticism but been led
Further along the same criterial paths
To more elaborately determinate

BROWNING

Uncompromising non-conformity.
Though, as it may be, I, regretting still
Miscomprehension, have (as all men must)
In some sort stultified my judgment, yearn'd
For common ground ; portray'd — scarce by intent
Deliberately acknowledged — in the speech
And art-form of their pseudo-classic cult
A characterization never quite
The truth I 'd make it in a genuine art.
Still, despite such scarce-conscious tendency
To blur distinctions, seek communicancy
And sanity at all cost, stand I sane
In my firm non-conformity ; and would
Deprecate too much comprehension, plead
Mistake of fact in those who honestly
Now are my flatterers and fancy fate
Mixes men's spirits to absorbency
Of personal irreducible self-poise.
Nay, it is ' utterly determinate
' This world of mine and thine ' — I catch myself
Quoting my critics : they who fancied mine
The mysticism ! Let me calmly face
The paradox which leads me to maintain
The very phrases of the enemy

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Over against the championing of friends.
The paradox : How can determinism
Of feature, universalism still
Of purport, best be found in monologue
(As this my monologue) of personal truth ?
How avoid, on the one hand emptiness
Of mystical inconsequence — a speech
Of sentimental egotism without
A world shown autovital ; on the other
The piecemeal profitless rehearsal of
My place and thine as to some chronicler
Such acts appear ? Lo ! for the first were such,
Based in immediate sensibility
Lawless and orderless of any soul's,
As these my new-made sycophants suppose
They prove of me, a sheer community
Sans dignified distinctiveness of person
In ultimate judgment ; and the second were
The classic dialogue or pluralogue
Which, based in some supposed eternity
Of ordering, dramatic poet's-truth,
Tells no self-judgment, neither mine nor thine ;
Unions no self-responsibility ;
Presents, depicts, permits speak each a part

BROWNING

The puppets of the scene — in no way mine
Nor any person's ? — Let my monologue
Dialogue-wise dramatically prove
Its own supremacy in yielding place
Subordinate to just their give and take.
For, while I live, will yet my verses prove
Their fresh sincerity. When I am not,
Shall men arise to crush them ; and there be
No comprehender who can say : 'T is truth.
One shall arise, haply, obscure of name
But cogent, facile, who shall say of me,
With no one to dispute, what now no man
Would dare maintain. Let me now answer him !

And he shall say : ' 'T were sheer vulgarity
' Of personal opinion. This his speech
' Of monstrous-mouth'd soliloquy but sets
' World as he sees it, as he would it were
' Or were not ; ay, characterizes all
' By blindest passionate unestimate,
' Nowise by ordering of art's cosmic scheme.
' His were a poetry of barbarism,
' Wanting establish'd canon, wanting art's
' True objectivity, true beauty-speech

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

'Of reasoning humanity. How call
'Such primitive, ay, protoplasmic rant —
'Guiltless of symmetry, propriety
'And absolute proportion — poetism
'Of modern meaning? Rather is the world
'Of modern meaning but affirming more
'And more art's classic preëstablishment
'Of real ideals, of eternal forms
'Whereto our acts are moulded!' How shall I
Fully consider, entertain and test
This condemnation; who would yet condemn
Myself for overclose conformity
To just those unideal abstract terms
Of outworn classicism he 'd uphold?

For in my first flash of self-sensate power
I spoke, if youthfully, yet manly too
My self forth in a person, thought and speech,
Toward this Pauline, toward that Sordello; still
Dramatic only by objective force
Of my world-unioning in point of view
Adaptive, recreative of the truth
Call'd David's, Paracelsus': now mine own.
Thus far a fair beginning in a form

BROWNING

Not altogether novel, none the less
Rational, genuine, believed in : my
Speech in so far as I were merely self
The lover, the narrator ; else my speech
As I were David, Paracelsus. But
Soon came the tempting of convention, soon
The yielding to the outworn classicism
Of playwright dialogue, the give and take
Of puppet-persons, plausibly the speech
Of powers not mine own which make for good
Or evil sans responsibility
Of mine for making every mouth speak truth.
Such were the fallacy : an order'd scheme
Beyond the poet's authorship ; a world
Realistical imposed as from without
On a mere chronicler : the gross mistake
Of all mere classicism — general law
The scapegoat for the puppets' fallings-short !
Such were my Strafford, Luria, my Blot
In the 'Scutcheon, Druses, Victor and King Charles ;
Puppet-plays : if not perfect of their kind
(Not mine such technic), 't was because I felt
Fallacy : — I, the author, clean escaped
From authorship ; my art alleged some world's !

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And from the first the critics took to task
My private personal self-poise ; alleged
Even my forthright drama still too germane
To individual bias ; branded those
My people of their pseudo-classic cult,
My Strafford, Tresham, Luria — but me ;
'Mere puppets' (how all tongues cleave to that word !)
Solely because too little puppet-like,
Too self-contaminate ! — Too much mine own,
Alive and genuine ! — And now the crowd
Of sycophants, echoing critic-cry
With counter-purport of approval, fawn,
Flatter for my supposed escape at last
From 'objectivity' ; 'pure sentiment
'Of soul's immediate mysticism' express'd
In 'allegory of my moods and aims',
'Their' moods and aims by being conceived so vague
As to fit none. Wherefore I stand appraised
For an alleged yet rightly unperform'd
'Subjectivism' ; and condemn myself
Scarce for excessive objectivity
As truth defines it, but for too close clutch
Of the classic outward act, the puppet-speech
Supposed not still mine own : the universal

BROWNING

Not individual. So to the claim
Of him I parley with I say at last :
' Mine were too much the mere conformity
' To general abstract conservatism
' Of cultural tradition : losing thus
' Art's genuine objectivity of self
' Expressive through each puppet-circumstance,
' Determinate but universal too.
' If the first crude essay, the youthful whim,
' Were too much lover, not enough Pauline ;
' Narrator, scarce Sordello ; yet the truth
' Lies in development toward surer speech
' Like David's, Paracelsus' : now mine own
' As their truth should be, would be, were they now
' Citizens of my century in time
' Contemporaneous at soul with us.
' Which in a sort they were ; my ought-to-be
' (Ultimate standard of all truth in art)
' But an implied development through theirs.
' So, to your worn-out classicism, the cult
' Of chronicle, of puppet plausibly
' Speaking his law-taught part, accusing fate
' Else calling on the gods ; never at soul
' Protagonizing : " I, responsible,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

- ‘ “ Am fate, the gods ; my world of circumstances
‘ “ Is mine alone, and mine alone the chance
‘ “ To right it, comprehend it and explain
‘ “ Before all men a world intelligible
‘ “ Not extra-orderly, but through and through
‘ “ Self-comprehensive ” : such is my reply :
‘ Sir, misinterpret not my first attempts
‘ Too little worldly-wise to self-explain
‘ A circumstance not worthy a grown soul ;
‘ Nor set for standard of my full-grown art
‘ A pseudo-classicism never quite
‘ Self-felt, germane ; so not my world at all,
‘ Nor any’s. But accept for best at last
‘ These new ; now press-prepared, else waxing quick
‘ Beneath my pen, fledging from out my brain,
‘ To stand or fall with me ; my soul’s-own world,
‘ As utmost apprehension sets it right,
‘ In circumstance and scenery to suit
‘ Great situations of imagining —
‘ Proportion’d, symphonied and symmetrized
‘ By self-poise, universal, intricate
‘ Yet only thereby total, infinitely
‘ A self-sustaining, autovital art —
‘ My truliest life : my Guido, Andrea,

BROWNING

‘ Caliban, John, Giuseppi, and the Pope,
‘ Lippo, Pompilia, and Balaustion ! ’

Who shall have set world forth as I shall speak it,
My world, a world by being so worldly-mine ?
No shrinkage to an insignificant
Mere sentimental maundering to catch
The silly sycophants ; no cowardly
Cord-twitching that the marionettes may dance
Nor show the showman — him who made them so !
Who shall be stronger, still must ease his strength
As I, in speaking self forth in the speech
Of great souls, great by self-poised circumstance,
Not blindly passion-warp'd, but more and more
Personal, comprehensive of world-life !

MATTHEW ARNOLD

NOW the swift sun in heaven wins day by day
A loftier light ; earth in her laboring now
Increaseth hourly ; and all things seem
To breathe in strenuousness of taking on
New burden, new responsibility
By very virtue of aspiring lift
And spring of the year : that rest is far from all :
That yearning after dreams is a dead thing.
Yea, such were life, to wax and be inform'd
Of manifold new meaning constantly,
And only so to understand content.
Lo ! what containment, what satiety,
What organ'd equipoise, what peace preserved
In high endeavor endlessly renew'd !
I have endeavor'd ; but have not known peace.
I have had peace in purpose, hence have miss'd
it.

I have endeavor'd autumnwise to be
A winter of some statued mould and form
By outworn dignity, by antique pose
False to a modern mission. — Let me be
Mobile as May-world ; myriad, manifold

MATTHEW ARNOLD

As blades and blossoms. Let me weigh now well
The modern meaning. Let me learn my soul.

It is the old, old word : this, ' Know Thyself ' ;
Stale as their Greek confusion of that self
With ' me ' or ' thee '. And I have feign'd some Greek,
Impersonated some atomic mould
Of private purpose ; whilst my social world
Was yet not of me ; in the strife of things
Been soul-impassible, been stoic-strong
By cowardly evasion ; else have been
But deprecator, ay, conservative
Of truths whose needed conservation proved
Their incompatibility with now,
Their falsity as I have sought them. Yet
My self, my person now must be the world
Of modern implication, a self-world,
Yea ; and a spring-world, as the soul of the year
Is spring, not autumn nor earth's wintering.
As the swift sun in heaven shall be my song
Of liberal assumption, taking on me
The burden as a blessing of all functions
Fallen to the now-born ! Was the song of old —
So simple-sane, so mystic-mythical ! —

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

A cowardly avoidance of such creed
And cult as yonder Sophocles might deem
Crux of an uttermost modernity ?
Were any work that seems so chaste, so far
From tumult of an actuality,
By any peradventure meant to be
Evasive of soul's daily intercourse
And stint of due perplexity of path ?
Could any art be whole by emptiness?
Was not the world then old, the soul as young
To grasp it, as are now my world, my soul ?
Quick both, as pictured in this passing spring ?

Never were beauty a mere contemplation,
Nor God a reminiscence. If I fail
To find in models of our modern art
Criterion for satisfaction, if
These creeds and formulæ of churches stick
In the throat, am I then left alone of the world
A misplaced pagan, Phidias born too late ?
No man were born misplaced, none sprung too late
Out of the sun-lift and the lap of life
Which bringeth forth in season every thing !
But with the still-increasing flux of earth

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Evolve art and belief, develop form
And function of our loftiest intellect
In vastest grasp and passion. As we be
Now a new world that stands not satisfied
With God-beyond ; shall God-within-the-world
Be any metaphor call'd Zeus indeed ?
Shall God be of the world as I and these
Though not divinity of them nor me ?
Shall mine Empedocles absorb my soul
To atheism and contempt, that art
And God-creeds need renewing ? Rustum were
The nobler puppet, who fought out his life
To tragedy but not to cynicism.
Oh, for some theme of modern-made idea
Which, matching spring in inborn novelty,
Stands ever old, older than Zeus or men
By being to-day divine, some world-device
Of absolute soulship speaking in the mouth
Of me, not Rustum nor Empedocles !
No Tyrian trader from the world shall hoard
His splendor for salvation, no dismay
Shall rant on flame-bursts, nor to element
Resign the soul ! But something of a faith
In understanding of a modern mood

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Shall mean God most in complications sprung
Of fluxion, spring-life and the lift of earth
Inevitable. And my theme shall be
Thus Greek, thus Phidian, Æschylus anew
By dealing in the plain, spontaneous,
Self-language of the times, most pure, least foul
With obsolete inheritance of myth's
Equivocation ; meaning that I mean.
Thus, then, shall all this frail agnostic cant
Find autumn's place ; and if the creed be worn
Be there renewal seeded of the fall.
Let the new creed afford right meaning for
The creed rejected, let the new art show
Old myth subordinant, old metaphor
But outworn fact : thus, the new fact full truth. —

Now the swift sun in heaven wins all my soul
To spring-truth and soul-cycle of the year.
In creed and art, no skeptical dismay
More, nor withdrawal from the market-place
And sphere of high contention faith with faith !
Here is earth's wonderful sweet market-place
Of blossoming contention — 'would my soul
Had learn'd herself so as a world of men !

GORDON

'I CAME, not to bring peace, but with a sword!' —
Would that some power might bring Christ's
sword to me!

His peace I look not for : and yet I came
To bring these deserts peace and not a sword.

How strangely turns our goodwill among men
Into a hate and mockery of love —
A hate without and mockery within
These walls that I have built about men's homes !
How came I hither, if with sword to show
Uncoward aspect, yet with peace at heart
Intended unto all — at worst, a sword
For those without my walls ! And now at last
Here gaze I yearning toward that folk (which
did
So long forget past years) that they 'll but
bring
Power to rid me of my seeming friends
Whom I mistrust more than mine enemies.
Ay, treachery within and foes without
This leaguer'd city augur some swift peace

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Indeed unto my spirit. Though I seek
No peace ; but, as the Master said, a sword.

Not for myself indeed I seek that sword.
My life were well-nigh ended, and well-spent
In serving somewhat Christ and these poor crowds
Of desert people. But that at the last
My work should end, not in some forthright breach
With those who will not love me nor my ways,
But in the simulance of fellowship,
A stab in the dark, a thrust, a sneer ; and all
Is fallen of the fabric I had rear'd,
Here among Christless folk, of Christian's faith :
Fabric I fain had rear'd of man to man
Open and honest if not brotherly —
Such work to end as Judas ended once
A nobler ! Let it be. The comfort comes
In the meek parallel : my goal as His.

So we start forth in singleness of soul
To live straightforward, act and speak what best
Is in us honest and above regard
For what the world would have us speak and act
Save as we judge best to be understood

GORDON

Aright and meet men on men's common ground.
But somewhere we must swerve. As when I came
Declaring mine a sword, though peace at heart
Was in me. — Was it not also in Christ ?
Was Jesus' end by treachery because
He scarce might wield a sword He would not wear
While yet proclaiming warfare to the world ?
Is mine impending doom this that it is,
Even with the night that falleth now upon
This turbulent city, but because I came
No longer open with a sword at heart,
Else peace upon my brow to match my soul ;
And so destroy'd the fabric of a faith
In single purpose by my double deed ?

Christ, I accept the desperate consequence
As Thou acceptedst. For I too forswore
My singleness of spirit. — Shall a man
Do otherwise, die otherwise : than Thou ?

MOHAMMED AHMED

A PROPHECY. Let the scribes write it down
Even as I speak it. For it is my last : —

God and the Prophet and myself I preach
In provident succession. He who comes
After me, Abdullahi here, shall preach
God and the Prophet and myself the same,
Who am the true Imam. And over me
Shall Abdullahi rear the tomb which I
Have founded ; and shall make it as I now
Declare in vision. For the length and breadth
By cubits shall be equal ; but the height
Somewhat exceeding, as the heavens are high
Arch'd above earth's flat floor whereon we dwell.
And in the side-walls be there entrances
To signify my body still with men.
Only, about the whole be built a yard
And a well dug ; for this were holy ground.
Finally at the centre based upon
Those inner arches shall be raised aloft
First a pure prism of six crystalline sides
To indicate my clarity of mind

MOHAMMED AHMED

And so approach the perfect spherical
Which heavenlike is my soul ; domed, yea, and gold. —
Such is the prophecy. And let the scribes
Prepare it for decree publicly read
As my last utterance from God amending
Those earlier prophecies foregone of how
Mine end were elsewhere. — Ah, but even at once
Mine end approacheth. I would be alone,
Well rid of earth, with Abdullahi here
(Son of my spirit !) to confer on him,
Whilst none shall witness, my firman from God. —

Are we alone ? — Friend Abdullahi, thou
Knowest how I have longtime sought release
From this hypocrisy which we have made
My pitiful substance. But I fear'd the fall,
First, of myself — what have I now to fear
Who feel the worst, the bitterness of death ? —
Then, of this mighty empire we have rear'd
In men's credulity. I leave to thee
A dangerous and a bitter task ; and yet
Somewise an easier. For myself have been,
If push'd by thee yet still responsibly,
The main impostor. Thou needst but adore

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The dome thou buildest o'er me ; and the rest
Is plain oppression, grateful to thy soul.
I pity, ay, thy people more than thee !
Temper the tyranny : 't will longer last
Than if the superstition be too strain'd.

The superstition ! How, oft-whiles, I think
Of those days when the inspiration seem'd,
And was, from God ; then when at Abba Isle
I taught in absolute humility
Truths of my spirit, what I rightly knew
Concerning manhood and the way of life
(Oppression, Abdullahi, was my scorn !)
Fit for my soul, and therefore fit that men
Should hear it and be privileged to try
Whether to choose their way of life like mine.
God is so good, He gives the truth to each
So perfectly adapted to the need,
He makes it seem as though some truth for all
Alike were vouchsafed : though such is not so,
Mine Abdullahi. But it came to me
As if my ministry (thus Moslem folk
Are ever dreaming !) was, to every man
The same, a revelation ; though forsooth

MOHAMMED AHMED

The lowliest Dongolawi of them all
Hath truth in some degree for him as true
As for me mine. I know this plainly now.
For, as death comes and feverish heat abates,
Are the eyes open'd. — Whence, this woof of lies
Which I have woven, prophecies and worse,
If not in effort I have made that men
Believe as I believe, whether or no
Their circumstance and each intelligence
Of sense and reason may condemn my creed
Available for me but not for them?
For thus have I forsworn my privacy
As theirs of final judgment each unique;
And thus deprived my faith of honesty.
Whence, mine undue assumption? mine, who
 preach
Humility and abstinence, yet grasp
A god's immunity from any law
Save satisfaction of my pride and lust? —
God are we, Abdullahi; but not gods!

Thou, Abdullahi, knowest even as I
Whereof we build our empire here on earth.
Nor wilt thou dream I rave. But thou wilt pray

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

With me that God be gracious, and my faults
Be visited not on them who had faith
When first I felt and taught the word of God—
The woof of God, I say, though now false-warp'd
From the fine fabric that my life had been !
I leave it, then, to thee, the awful task
To save this people from the ire of God
As I have roused it. Canst thou find a way?
Even the old hypocrisy ? 'T were best.
We are too far in treachery to try
New ways of singleness. The folk we fool
Were leaderless, wert thou less false than I.—
Fear, save for them, shall now be flung far from
me,
Though worse for me may come than this of death !
Spare but the tyranny ; 't is all I ask.
Bear no consideration for my soul.
Absolve me from no sins of blasphemy
By ruining this empire ! Rather burn'd
I in hell-fire a thousand years and one
Than earn heaven by apostasy of thine
When earth depends still on the perfect fraud !
Therefore I tell thee that the sin is best.
'T will save them from themselves lest they awake

MOHAMMED AHMED

To learn the great deception, and go mad !

For thee, like me, 't were late : our souls are lost. —

Call them to witness of my latter end.

TENNYSON

NOW in the eve and twilight of mine age
I turn to see what stadia I have pass'd
In the world's road, if any. And my year
Hath pass'd and many seasons over me ;
That winter now approacheth. But my path,
Though beautiful in autumn retrospect,
Shows not so long — despite the lengthening haze —
As I in journeying along it deem'd.
If a straight path, yet are there backward feet,
'T would seem, and many turnings on the road,
Wanderings aside and strange reluctances
Of yearning memory : a fear, through all,
Of these, those ' other faces ', ' other minds ',
Which now close in about me. Though the school
Applaud and love, I, with mine old-age sight
Of tendencies and meanings hitherto
Unseen, can in nowise applaud my way.
A way the blind, the halt, the backward turn'd
Might travel for its smoothness which the feet
Of me with many stumblings, much retread,
Wrought to the road where men so oft before
Had journey'd; but no onway hewn among

TENNYSON

The noble all-embracing lonelinesses
Of earth-uplifting solitary thought. —
I have been solitary to my shame :
Though spoil'd with much laudation, yet alone
In self and spirit, strange unto a world
Which strain'd beyond me ; and came back to rest
Unto my bosom but for ease and sleep,
Forgetful of day's onward dignities.
Sweet were the uses of conservancy,
Of backward-yearning and the requiem
Which autumn yields the year. Sweet the smooth path
Of verbal dalliance, wide simplicities :
The cowardice which, Platonizing still,
Apes the eternal verities outworn !
Life were not retrospect. Yet all my life
Hath inwardly but been as retrospect.
Now let my final retrospect absolve
The blame ; mine old age be not — Tithonus !
For, lo ! my soul hath been as Tithonus',
Not as Odysseus'. Let Odysseus' be
My yearning now toward ocean without end.

Ah, but a truce to antique imagery ;
Peace, peace to the dead language ! Let my tongue

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Speak plain, not mouth Lucretius ; find a speech
Of modern manner, nor mistake mine own
Bewilderment and latter pessimism —
Echo of Latin atomist despair —
For wise modernity ! Were Galahad
Or Launcelot, that tale of Guinevere ;
Were Arthur with his old companionship
(Trite types whose generality would serve
For almost any purpose, any proof :
And hence are false to any in themselves !)
Plain speech, an earnest prophecy of world
Within me, truth-expression of the strong
Whose beauty is by self-determinate grasp
Of literal apprehension — in the flower
Of the cranny, God and all ? Or were my richest,
Most perfect, most elaborated piece
Most a veil'd utterance, most overlaid
With mystery : a dimness ? Yea, that I
Did once speak plainly all the truest of me
Is little wonderful : when memory,
Regret — with consolations obsolete,
Suggestions of an heartening in faith
Itself a mystery, itself most veil'd —
Were all the stuff and splendor of that song !

TENNYSON

The rest were negligable ; though well-made,
Mere household saws, mere suave urbanities
(Men still will praise : ' Those fair humanities ' !)
Letter'd, polite, taught in the academe ;
Not stuff of strength nor splendor of the soul.
For I, I was not prophet of the times. —
There was another, one whose verse but seem'd
Uncouth, that I despised it at my heart.
Yet, how he moved on past the lagging throng
In freedom and in grandeur of plain speech !
His very manner now is at my tongue
As truth pleads in me to be up and heard !
Beyond him I divine some statelier verse
(As yet unmade, if ever to be made ?)
Of splendid-surfing insight, some new power
(By God-abandonment) of finding godship
In personal conscience of an unique world
Wherein no man is instance of the rest :
But each concludes by definition all :
Plain speech become beauty by absoluteness ?
'T were sole alternative to cynicism.
'T were autumn, no ; nor winter, nor the spring,
Nor any season ; but the round of all
Concentred, focus'd to the eternal year ! —

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

His was a spring. Could some humility
In me have hail'd in him my complement ! —

With the fair, fine return of every autumn,
Of autumn in its lingering retrospect
When each reverted day reluctantly
Leaveth itself behind, have I been moved
Increasingly toward song : that now I sing
For ultimate autumn my confessional.
For something in the season aye hath been
My special inspiration. I have sung
If most-part of the springtime, summer's flood
And wintry barrenness ; yet aye the ebb
Of retrospection and of lingering
Hath been my burden, message of my word.
If melancholy loveliness I leave
To those that are bewilder'd with the world
As I: dim richness as of Camelot
Seeming to them Avilion's own vale
(Avilion may be, but not quick earth);
Idalian Oenone, only dreams
Of modern plasticism unalive —
A mourning yet for antique faiths outworn,
A living life but in the lost of things,

TENNYSON

A Romanhood when Rome is not the world ! —
I have call'd halt and turn'd but in my mire.
I see some souls which leap out of this slough
Of mean dismay: accepting all now proven
Of unity, automatism, of each
New subtler involution of one clay
From nebula to poet; yet insisting
The nebulous material thus proven
Pole but of spirit. Subtler doctrines still
Evolve and involve from the lost belief:
Involving no lost dignity to man
Free of a maker: Somewhat self-made still;
Not myrmidon of nescience as I fear'd!
I see some souls thus best conserving truth
By ever journeying on truth's new way. —
But I, I have no motion of mine own:
Save if my motion be by retrogress,
My mild despair be still some share of light
Illumining reflectively the faith
Whence future light shall spring and be renew'd:
My movelessness (through all that was of strength)
At last avow'd, proving my motion now.
Yea, though I am not now such strength as in
Old days bewail'd but earth and fear'd for heaven,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Such as I am, I am : knowing myself.
So have I gather'd up all left behind
Like to the wholeness of the onrolling year ;
That there is no regret : but onwardness.

WYCKOFF

WEEKS, months, and years at laboring with these hands
Of mine untrain'd to toil have well-nigh used
Muscles and sinews to the manual work,
Callous'd the skin, stiffen'd the horny grasp ;
Subdued frame, fingers, almost brain beside
To fitness for the nerve-mechanical
Brute task ; made brawn the measure of my might ;
Man, physic-mass ! — Experiment's success ?
Well-nigh pure proxihood's reality ? —
Some way the day's fatigue, the listlessness
Of unrewarded search (though scarce despair
By any fear to starve), relaxing brawn
Here as I stumble restward through the dusk,
Indeed mere outcast of the unemploy'd,
A reek with sweat, dinn'd with the city's roar,
Unnerves the tense-strung sinew, frees the brain
Momently for the dubious questioning ;
Confronts soul with the skepticism ; lays bare
Depths of a void denial. Sole alone
Halt I amid the throng where by the bridge
Shadowy sweeps with sluggish sullenness
The city's sink and sewer : I, of these

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Millions of maul'd humanities, one soul —
Despite soul's uttermost insistency
At comradeship and merging to their mould —
A solitary and a loneliness
Doom'd as yon river to receive yet scarce
Assimilate; acknowledge all the stew
And stink and crime, the sin; assume their filth,
Take tinge and city-substance (as these hands
Harden to tint of turmoil) yet stream on
A solitary and a power alone
By weakness, by incapability
Of fixedness, adoption of the fact
Of any other; but — a glimmering doubt —
Sweep on and hold no permeant cognizance
Of city, shadow and flare. Even so my soul
Incapable of proxihood steals on;
Rouses and wakes, as with a lightless depth
Of dismal fluxion, to the finite lore :
'Not I, but thou, thou rank'd humanity
'Of city-stricture and mechanic pain,
'Suffering, pitiable; not my soul
'For any forced assumption of thy wrongs !'

Weeks, months and years! yet labor as I may

WYCKOFF

Still miss I proxihood : experiment
Fail'd of perfection ! — I, the flesh'd and eased
In worldly circumstance, yet sensed and fill'd
Of the physical sufferance of man-made-beast ;
I, scientist, philosopher, wide known
And widelier knowing, yet with ache and pang
Of the pinch'd, impoverish'd, prevented souls
Of mass'd humanity, by sympathy
Tortured, o'erwhelm'd ; conceiving passionately
A mission, duty to be done for these ;
Desiring so, and reasoning to attain
More intimate insight of men's distress
The abler to make proselyte the world
To ways of reparation : did put off
(Even as yon river, swirl'd to tortured pool,
Lamps, in default of motion, mirror-lights)
All circumstance of comfort and mine ease
Laboring brute-like with the herd. — Saith not
Christ, ' Lift the stone and ye shall find me ' ? —

So

Sought I to lift and stir the stone, thereby
Christlike for vicar to assume the soul
(Even as yon whirlpool by the mock-lamp'd lights)
Of man-made-brute ; to raise by love man's least.

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Weeks, months and years : and still the soul-made-brute

(Better or worse than brute, it matters not)
Of mankind mass'd and mired is by no means
Mine; nor the proxihood: experiment
Daily more futile, daily more remote
From pure adoption, adequate insight
Of the menial misery. At this twilight hour
Lonely along dull-glimmering curbs I go
Half-fed, unkempt, craving the primal curse
Of labor, longing but the natural right
To toil: an outcast of the unemploy'd!
Yet, in man's uttermost distress'd estate,
No mere man-scum: at stand here by the brink
No city: river-like sensitive indeed
To loneliness, to love forlornness means!
Failure foredoom'd! And in this hour I feel
Fatuity of any vicarage,
Insight, nay sympathy: and am at heart
Love's contradiction, deeming futile all
Approximation and all guardianship.
Can I, incapable of bosoming
Feature or fashion of the souls I'd ape
(As lights flare but from surface of yon stream),

WYCKOFF

Blind to oblivion of mine old estate
Which was mine and remains — but should not
so —

A standard fix'd for strain'd comparison
Warping the actualization, thwarting real
Appreciation (as yon river hoards
High mountain-outlook) of the prison pain,
The absoluteness of this cursed estate
(City but city and no gloried gorge) —
So false (and no criterion obtains
For fault's correction) to this state assumed:
Can I, in ignorance of the true distress
(Bound to the ignorance by mountain-birth),
In error at diagnosis of disease
Pander prescription, seek make proselyte
World to a reparation; when redress
Aims at an end uncognizable, wills
Cure for complaint (this city stands unproved
By gleam nor scum) no postulate shall prove?
Ay, grant their case be none so desperate
As sympathy conceived (the cataract's
Too crude anticipation), grant how brute
Being brute (if brute be brutish plausibly)
Could scarce appreciate the solitude,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Nor man-mere-brute with mine intensity
(This stagnant city with this stream's strain'd
sweep)
Confront forlornness and feel finitude!
It boots not, scarce affects fatuity
Of proxihood and pure experiment.
Yield the contention ; can I possibly
Acquire precise criterion the more
Through recognizing how criterion
Varies, a fluxion ; mine expectancy
Of solitude and finiteness, apart
From any solitude and finiteness
The solitary and the finitude
Could comprehend nor yet belie their name ? —
City see city seen from mountain-side?
Absurdity! Yet city stands none less
Beyond (beneath, above, indifferent which)
All possibility of stream's insight
Of city-scum, of city-flare as fix'd
And irremediable, strictured. So
Strictured and irremediable, fix'd
Flows lone yon river, lone between brick'd banks! —
Ay, what though case be none so desperate?
'T is yet the death-disease, most desperate

WYCKOFF

Of man's society ; needs antidote
None less, though health be palpably at fault
In pitying with sheer healthiness' recoil
(As mountain-stream froth'd for the sewer's fear)
Fever that for the victim's feverishness
Seems scarce self-pitiable at the worst.
Craves health or illness febrifuge none less
(Street's putrefaction, purifying still)
To minister, to mouth till ease obtain.
For by default of worse disease, what worse
Extremity can be for health-redress ?
Miserable, or scarce miserable so much
As by my preconceived impulsive plot,
Failure none less ; no possibility
Of mine appreciation, real insight
By Christ-assumption : nor no antidote,
No mission and no duty through the world !
Nay, yielding some least feasibility
That sweating, toiling ; even the memory weak
Of one-time independence and mine ease
(Yon black, oblivious of the torrent-spume) ;
All expectation of triumphant burst
(Anticipant gravitation seaward) wide
Abroad in proselyting of the earth ;

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

All sense of difference in real degree
'Twixt mine, my soul promoting proxihood
For enterprise of ethical import
And this my mean assumed estate : destroy'd
(Source both and ocean-solace damm'd) ; at last
I were by stultification in all sort
Reduced to just the appropriate preconceived
Or ill-conceived brute proletariat : —
Where then the proof's experiment (what stream
For city's imaging nor purge ?) ; wherein
Were I other than him I seem and were,
No-Christ but Pharisee, the actual crude
Muscle-mass (stagnant pool, miasmic, stench'd
As any) worst in want of aid indeed ;
No purge, nor comfort, vicar, nor no God ;
But just that man, that man-made-brute whose city
Loses, by gaining me, all hope through me
Of purification. — By profoundest proof
Of perfect proxihood, no proof at all,
No proxihood, no vicarage. —

I fail,

Avow the failure : sheer experiment
But truth-annihilation in so far
As actual approximation's gain'd.

WYCKOFF

And with the plausible experiment
Goes worth of any insight, power assumed
Of adequate information imaging
In my fact any other. For my fact
Is stream and shall be stream, swirl'd ne'er so
 strait

Through city's boundaries. And all attempt
By eddy, whirlpool to assimilate
Shows but a self-denial, self-distraught
Admission of the ultimate nothingness,
Nescience, non-insight, non-criterion,
Denial of all duty, right and law,
Abandonment of world-community
For pure exclusion'd self-identifying,
Indifferent alive or dead. And lest
The proxihood (pool clogg'd and choked to the brim)
Get hold on me; and my Gethsemane
Mark end at last of every high resolve
In sheer subdual to the murk I'd mould :
Be one resolve, last, best a man may make —
True to the primal self-identity
Of finite individual lapsingness,
The nescience and the lawless entity,
The lovelessness, the helplessness : one step,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

One cast of body : and this life's soul-death
Is done ! Firmly I fling: and shall be done ! —

One stark recoil ! — Done ? Can this life-in-death
Have value, that the dismal death in the stream
Should prompt revolt, create the new resolve
By ultimate reaction, absolute
Soul-estimation of the world ? What though
This body, wash'd and rotting in the tide
Disintegrate but toward and through new life,
Chemic, bacterial, vegetative, man's
Anew, or not man's, piecemeal, yet eterne
By process ? What though this self-conscious soul
Cease not, but swoon in the throes with ne'er an end,
Being self-criterion of endurance (even
As yon stream, being but stream, was yet some snow,
Shall be some ocean ; though, for stream as stream,
Stream still unendingly) ? What though being-done,
By science or philosophy alike,
Stands proved impossible inanity ?
'T is yet this self-endurance, each least jot
Of multiple manifold redundancy,
The wide determinism interminable
Whose each new tittle — stone uplift and stirr'd —

WYCKOFF

Has absolute value and soul-vicarage.
Ay, each least finite contrast (the swept stream
Incapable of cityship, yon town
Self-imperturbable to seawardness)
Holding at heart, subtending inmost-wise
An ultimate union through reality,
Value, omniscience infinitely whole
By being but irremediably distinct
(Stream but by city-contradiction; town
By being no-stream) still self-identified
Each in and through all others totally.

Experiment's success? — Experiment
Was absolute, perfected, in and through
Each failure of the proxihood; this soul,
Not by inanity of mutual merge,
Purity of adoption self-denied,
But by development new day by day
Of intimate contrast, rich complexity
Of mine impossibility but through
Distinction, whence — not self-abandoning
All nature, but of absolute insight
(As they through me, I through the soul of them)
Original and natural — at last

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Physician, Christ-creator from the first. —
Nescience by ultimate delusiveness?
Nay, but by mediate delusiveness
(And mediation, imaging, yon flare
In the whirlpool, stands final delusion save
Delusion-recognized, so absolute truth)
Distinctively the self-world-conscience shows
Truth unto truth, and no bewilderment.
Discouragement? — This militant world-soul
Of mine (yon river ceaselessly at sweep)
But by ambition endlessly to learn
More intimately, more complexly proved
The richness and the sociology
Of soul-original transcendent sight,
Stands soul at all: and confident by doubt,
Constant assured by utmost skepticism,
Proves true the proxihood, experiment's
Success: and shall make proselyte my world!
I, toiler best by best philosophy:
Vicar, Christ-guardian by love-unioning
In soul-experiment, stirring stones all
(Proving the stone self-stirr'd by world-whole stir):
Scarce by mere stiffening of this callous'd palm,
Scarce by endeavor to be brute — (what brute?) —

WYCKOFF

But by the duty, mission, right conceived
Of work's infinity in serving so
Conscience, omniscience, God-society !

Such, for triumphant strength of twilight doubt
Ultimate, doubt-defeating. — The strong noon
Shall prove again experiment's despair.

NANSEN

' MID ice and night onward and onward : ice,
Night unresisted heaving on and on
Though motiveless yet mightily my life
In passion of the pack ; pressing on, on
From nought through nought : no progress : passage
proved

Prison ; persistence, powerlessness : or Pole
Or no Pole, equal impotence ! — In patience
My soul sees, even in impotence, fulfill'd
The prophecy that built, equipp'd, launch'd forth
Her foresight. Yea ; this power, this thrust and stress
At bend and burst broad, loud below in the bleak,
My heart holds ; comprehends ; conclusively
Bursts beyond, thrusts down, down and bounds above
In freedom of buoyancy. My ship, my soul
Are motive ; are sun and strength beyond aught here !

Passion and patience of the universe,
Doom'd to this dead, eternal ice and night !
From nought through nought and nowhere any end ;
No bourne to passage, strength to patience none ;
Motive to life nor any life save death :

NANSEN

Moon, and these myriad stars moon-dead to-be ! —
Yet : what of This that knows, that wills an end,
This God-I-Am : for whom, through whom, in whom
Alone are ice and night and anything :
This strength-of-suffering, power of life-through-death ;
Prophet, transcendence of the darkness here ?
Something, through uttermost of ice and night,
Will that I question fact ; unfelt before
Somewhat essential beyond ice or night
Questions the doom ; demands, if there be life
In me and through me, how may death persist,
Ice and night so entomb earth's truth to-be ?
World ceases not though I cease or not cease !
What of world's soul that comprehends ; concludes
Together nought with nought ; proves passage, bourne ;
Chaos yet cosmos, sentient-systeming :
Moon-dearth but sensible by strength of sun ;
Strength endless, being criterion of end ?
What of the Self to science' selflessness :
Spirit to substance of world's ice and night ? —
Hegel or Kelvin ? Kant with Christ or — what ? —
Lo ! in this bitterly blank night, the breeze
Blistering this breast to bleak frigidity ;
Here above bellowing ice-blocks, stark aloft

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

At masthead 'mid these thorn'd tormenting stars,
This vinegar, this mockery of moon :
Must I alone this hour sweat through this passion
Of intellectual agony made mine ;
Wrestle, resolve (so crucified my soul
Vicar for this dumb-arctic eloquence)
World's problem of perpetuance, of power :
In truth's name how an universe can be ! —
I, so be intellect for deaf and dead,
Savior for snows that scarce can think or speak,
Christ for the ice and night : to prove for these
Philosophy or science, faith or fact : —
Conclusion foregone that I speak as Christ
Speaking their self best in this self of mine,
Speaking myself best in the self of these :
By sympathy a faith — not selfless fact :
An intellectual-conscience, scarce machine !

Yet, it is new, this union ; till this hour
Unrealized ; till this night precluded quite
By full acceptance of the selfless fact,
Sheer science : Kelvin, Huxley ! — Christ or Kant
Left out of count now, first the formal, fair
Rehearsal of the fact ! —

NANSEN

To clutch a shroud ;

Shake with the strong wind streaming ; ramp and rock
With sufferance of the vessel shock'd ; upheaved
With every blasting of the bleak below.

'T is to be fact for facts ; be buffeted
As block beats block ; be wail'd-on by the wind.

Above, the boreal auroras ; broad
Beyond, about, below, the bleak, blown packs
Sunless as senseless. To be one of these.

Ay : and how comes it to be one of these ?

Review the history, sum up the law

Of evolution, nebula to now :

The progress such and such ; geogeny,

Biogeny, psychogeny ; the chain

From nebula to now : and every new

Born out of old. And flesh, this organ'd mass

Nerved, sinew'd draws descent direct, distinct

From nebula ; is substance as the stars,

Substance as ice and night : and one with these.

Ay, though be ice, night, moon, but equally

With sunshine, quickening vapor metaphor

For death or life : their real identity

Nor death nor life, but force, fate : yet are these —

The less, the more — equal inanity

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of fact's necessity : ' Self ', one of these ;
Phenomenon of nerve-phenomena,
Some sheer spontaneous sentience of a ' world '
Was not, nor shall be : actual world none less,
Indifferent, independent, nerve or nought :
Intelligence or non-intelligence
Indifferent to existence of the fact.
Ay, this ' world-overweighting ' of the brain,
This ' passionate, transcendent ponderance
' Of soul ', this critical compendiousness
Of ' mind ' o'er matter, ' Christhood ', ' vicarage ',
This ' saviorship of union'd intellect
' Its agonied redemption ', were but beats
Of the ganglion, nerve-tissued blow on blow,
Shaking and surging of the plasmic cells
At sweat and ramp and rage of bursting blood ;
This ' God-I-Am ' some subtlest ice or night
Blow for blow, burst for burst the same in sort
As bellowing ice-pack and this boreal blast :
Nerve, native as the nebula : no-soul !
Such are the facts to test and find them true ;
No link disjuncted : perfect in the proof.
And, for the logic of all law is such
Must man with world come to the doom at last —

NANSEN

Kelvin's and Huxley's — with the spent machine :
With tendence moonward from the might of stars :
Space-dissipation of world's energy
To ice and night, no meaning. From the first
Even this surge from nebula to now
Nought but a space-dissemination, loss
Of energy potential kinetized
Toward equilibrium : equilibrium
But nothingness, no force, non-end inane :
Moon, nought save shown in sloth of swooning
sun.

And if, in such dissemination, 'soul'
(Nice nerve-vibration) over and beyond
The grosser substance chemical gain growth
And power organic over and beyond
The less-organic ; stands the law the same :
Such and such from the nebula to now
Mere evolution of the nerve from vague
Chaos through energy kinetic, sun
And star and sphere on sphere, through molten
mass,
Rock-metal, vegetation, sinew'd flesh
To man's brain : and from now back, back to night,
Cold crystalline benumbing up of nerve

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

In cosmical pulsation : now from man
Back to chill'd coalescence organless,
Lifeless conglomeration : ice and night! —
Ha ! the stars stab ; the bellowing below
Mocks to the marrow ! Unto ice and night
Dedicate nerve's destruction ! Now, to-night
(What of the years of the world if years yield
nought?)

Now, to-night end all ; headlong to the doom
Dash on the blank pack's bosom : far below
Beat brain out : end the agony ! In name
Of Kelvin, Huxley, now, to-night I leap :
Anticipate, make mine the doom of all ! —

Mine ? Mine the doom of all ! I hesitate ;
Hold breath ; breathe deep this agony of air :
Make it my blood and feel it mine ! I am !
Life is what means it to be one of these ! —
Alive, I-am ; nebula, nerve or night :
Necessitating future still as past
More and more, past as future, each in each !
World ceases not : nor I cease. World I am ! —
And it is new, this union : yet by will
To end all proved, made perfect endlessly

NANSEN

In intellectual action: Christ with Kant! —

Faith for the facts! Feel faith and find fact truth!

This logic of life-origin, this law

Of link'd necessity? Can link by link

Interminably link'd explain one life?

Mere mutuality, one molecule

Save as the mutual mean identity:

My life, or molecule, an union'd world?

Ay; in such sort: if just this self of mine —

God-mechanician to their made machine,

Else unmechanic mere nonentity! —

Hypothesized yet unexplain'd remain

(Hardly residuum, scarce for fact beyond)

Still for true source, being synthesis, of these,

Conscience and explanation, linkage, law —

(Sunlike to shrinkage of moon soulless else!) —

Not cause, yet all-causation; through and through

Immanence and intelligence of all

Else lawless, linkless, unionless, inane:

Self-ideality of each-through-each;

Each for itself forselfness even as I,

Identified in me as selfhood all:

The molecule in man, man-molecule,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Native reality : and only so
Real at all, molecule or man, for me :
Past, future, none less instant, self for self,
Real union, sentience each ; though yet for me
Polar, unmeaning save as union'd now.
Ay ; that I am, I am : all else in me
(As I in them, through them, by mutual proof —
How else, conceived empirics-error, save
World's self-assertion, countervail'd to mine,
In so far forth show Self neutrality ?)
Through me make mutuality of self
Distinct, determinate, dividual
Yet individual universally.
All that I am, I am : this world of mine ;
This universe : alive by saviorship,
(Monad or motive) Christhood-vicarage !
Development proved world-dissipation proves
By world-retort a false criterion,
Half-standard contradictory : proves worth
Of absolute process, progress regressive
In pure polarity self-reconciled
Evolving, mind from matter, most from least.
Law, from the nucleus to now, but time
Of self's maturing : ever to mature :

NANSEN

Even in the space-dissemination, time's
Ingathering of momentum ; human mind
O'er mental nebula progressive still
In mutual internality of lore
Even as o'er physical man the molecule
Nebular stood, still stands preëminent
In property material of force
Extern, displacement substantive ; alike
Materio-mental, least and most : one Soul
Erst nebular, now nebular-humane ;
Ubiquitous, being all-self spatialized ;
Eternal, being all-temporality :
Mine erst, mine now, mine still eternal-wise ;
By perpetuity through passingness
(This perfectness of process) nebula
To now, yet now by being but nebular
(Past and to-come but poles of permanence) :
Eternally my universe humane ! —
Is it, world-mutuality may end ?
Yet mutual how, save well aware through each,
Alive each molecule — that may not end,
Being each for self criterion of end,
World-mutuality in self alone ? —
Ice and night, 'ice' and 'night' (man's metaphor

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

For end-unmeaning, dead) but humanly ;
Ice yet for ice, night yet for night, humane
In selfhood nebular-molecular :
Moon yet for moon, as sun for sun, one world —
(Transcending metaphor) each molecule ! —
Union'd, processional unendingly —
Soul not above, beyond ; but immanent
Self-reference, intelligence through all !

Lo ! for behalf of such as scarce may speak,
Lo ! for life's ice and night, life laughs at loss :
Takes truth from lightning of the blank below :
Spurns space-dissemination : in despite
Turns law to law's impassion'd intellect
Proved in performance of my ship, my soul
Their prophecy, foresighted impotence !
Lo ! proved in the patience under pressure, power
Of passive Pole-persistency (extreme
Passion of logic push'd to point), behold
Motived preëminence of manhood-plan
O'er potency less mental ; o'er the bleak
Ice and night I for vicar proving world
Processive, though pulsation'd : I by proof
Lifting the lost to life's intelligence ;

NANSEN

Fact-science to philosophy by faith.
What of the equilibrium, inane
Frosting of nerve to nothingness? By pace
Equal, if opposite, above, beyond
The physical degeneration steps
The 'psychic' subtlety : nor moon nor star
Shows soul-futurity, save star or moon
In spirit equal-born ! — And I north, north
Push, overpower, soul-overweight their world
Of space-passivity ; their extreme verge
Of sphere yet union'd Pole through Zone, yet proved
Axial, self-orbited — being but motivated more
Pass on the lamp of light, cramp boundaries,
Burst and break down the barriers (limit proved
Barrier but by bursting) ; limitless
Lead on the more than human mind to-come
In conquest of physic's frigidity :
More and more conquer'd, spurn'd beyond, the more
Frosted in deadness of new ice and night. —
Ay ; and in conquest more and more shall world
(Or human or some supra-human nerve,
Some more than nerve) by reconciling more
More comprehend, include and lift to light
The 'deadness' and the 'darkness' : more and more

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Shall time to-come, immanent now, make now
An explanation and intelligence
By selfhood. — As my selfhood, savior now
Springs forth in fire abroad, auroral, vast
From stiffening of this Christhood on the cross
Stark aloft ! From the vicarage complete
(Torment of stars or mockery of moon :
This intellectual agony made mine) ;
Eternal principle of every end —
Christ for the ice and night, redeeming these ! —
For whom alone meaning or end may be :
World-saviorship that shall not end ! —

I rave ?

Drunk with the drench of drouth, of death ? I
freeze ? —

Ha ! the skies scoff ! I still am doom'd in dream :
Man, with the dead-eternal ice and night.

DREYFUS

NAY, I make no revolt ; accept the doom ;
Drag on in desolate, deliberate death
The life-imprisonment. No petulance,
No desperation ; only an intent
To realize utterly this miserable
Incarceration, learn appreciate
The bondage ; leave behind me here at death
The written testimony, manuscript
Of the judgeless punishment ; that world may know
As I know, once for all, so shudder at,
Assimilate and once for all forswear
(As I in pure appreciation rise,
In and through prisoning, beyond these bars
To absolute freedom of contemplating)
This horrible denial, vital void.

I have come through the whirlwind and am calm,
Calm as these stones and unremitting chains :
Shall ' keep calm for the purpose to speak truth ' .
I make no plaint : even mine innocence
Absolute of the charge preferr'd upon me
Seems scarce to irritate, exasperate

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Since the first bitterness of fierce turmoil,
Nor lure to loss of sanity. I but
Feel the more fully, may be, more abhor
The manner of my condemnation. Were I
But guilty as I now am innocent
Were uttermost abhorrence mine the same
As justly and as innocently 'gainst
Their absolute non-justice, disregard
Of any innocence or guilt of mine.
Though for the sake of this my narrative
Its prima facie evidence of truth,
Good faith, trustworthiness, I still am glad,
Take pride in innocence ; yet aggravate
My scorn, my self-transcendence of the doom
No whit because they work'd worse than they knew.
I'll not suppose they thought me innocent :
The imputation of malignancy
Is supererogatory. I maintain
But that mine innocence nor guilt at all
Bore weight in the matter, influenced the course
Of condemnation in the least degree.
There lies the blame, the worse than blackest blot
My soul can well conceive. On them I lay
Bloodguiltiness of total disregard

DREYFUS

For right nor wrong ; pursuance right or wrong
Of one hypothesized and prejudiced
Supposed essential policy : the case
Nowise in question ; the one dogma, all.

First, can prejudgment of one policy
To be pursued, regardless for whate'er
Of new may yet eventuate, constitute
By force of supreme faith its final right
In the conscience of its agent and absolve
Agent from any blame or merit else ?
Not so. I hold that certainly one faith,
To be sure, one self-ideal of a life
Guides each his action, nor can be escaped
By any subterfuge : evasions even
Serving but subtlier, more pervasively
So to develop and define the law
(Covering all exceptions utterly)
Of being and one's ultimate self-world.
Yet is such over-soul, transcendent union
No dogma of some still-persistent end,
No rule of specialist activity,
But such immanent unity as through
The multiple, mutable particular rules

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Finds itself, is their universal self,
Intrinsic unity : nowise prejudiced
Hypothesis, persistent disregard
For new experience ; but just the ground
Of all experience, of new as old :
And else were no instant self-certainty.
So much for self-consistency. I claim
That policy a perfidy toward self,
Denial of the self-organic growth
In freedom by necessity of point
To point link'd mutual in evolving life,
That policy the true self-perfidy
Which posits truth on strange authorization
And formal self-conviction once for all
Immutable. The self-consistency
(Monism of universal variance)
Has vital basis ; scarce excuses vain
Self-segregation from assimilation.
Whence remains question, to be tried and proved
In this my narrative for all the world :
Whether or no (sanely and quietly
As tranquil now) in so condemning me
Regard to any innocence or guilt
By way of evidence was properly

DREYFUS

Admitted ; whether or no prejudgment of
The cause precluded right or wrong throughout —
Inquiry calling for unprejudiced
Sifting of intricate procedure, which
Examination of each act by act
So far as I be not in ignorance
Unfairly, misinform'd of real events
Whose true report was due my perilment,
Shall be my narrative through patient years
Here 'mid these walls. But need not hinder now.

Secondly, of the systems which in the world
Most stand for sheer prejudgment, disregard
Of individual initiative,
Persistence in one abstract policy,
Represent, are expression of a pure
Obliviousness to actuality
Of self-conviction ; which require the most
Self-perfidy by policy pursued
Rigidly exoteric in the rule
Laid down by strange authority, I claim
The militar bureaucracy, their system
Of outworn mediæval ordering
Stands worst and most outrageous. Can the man

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Commission'd and authoritative, else
Outrank'd, owning allegiance, be excused
From charge of selling birthright, soul and all ?
Conceive the underling, the slave who stands
For puppet, prisoner of superior
Official and commission'd overlord ;
Drill'd, train'd by sheer reiteration to
Come, go at bidding ; kill if need be ; scarce
Of independence and intelligence
To breathe by self-direction : in so far
As man may utterly renounce his worth
Absolved from all responsibility,
All moral fibre ; made a mere machine,
Automaton : best soldier, the worst man.
Nor that there are in the world men who, save slaved,
Were wild, obstreperous, dangerous to their kind
(Deserving dungeon as I merit none)
Makes medal'd orderly nor cow'd poltroon
Better than galley-slave : who first renounce
(For lust of crime or lust of pay, what care ?)
All further rights of new experience,
All possibility to profit by
New stimulus toward new intelligence ; to
Evolve as individual, universed

DREYFUS

Man-of-a-world and actual entity.
Nay, that the stultification somewhat fails
Of innermost completeness but implies
Impossibility of mechanism :
Reflects no credit on the scheme which fails.
Courage with ready-reason'd action comes
Scarce of the soldier-element : remains
Residuum of the man not quite crush'd out.
And for the overlord, commissioner
In so far as not underling the same
To some outranking in authority,
'T would seem at first sight as though most of man
Remain'd uncrush'd, just by the exercise
Of uttermost authority self-will'd.
Yet in the superposed authority
Regardless of all self-initiative
(Save brainless flesh-instinctive ritual)
In the rank and file, springs real self-perfidy
Subtler, so more pernicious, worse abhorr'd
Than sheer automatism. For such will
Were merely will, sheerly the emptiness
Of indeterminate and self-estranged
Prejudgment. Every item for such law —
Pure overposited by fiatism,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Purely a puppet, of generic type
An instance merely and no fact at all
To be accounted with and reconciled —
Lacks world-reality, stands sheerly for
The overlord's subjectivism (these stones'
Regardlessness of innocence) no live
Ideal actuality, no truth.

Whence are all actions of such governance
(Wanting reality of govern'd selves)
Actions to no end of self-actual world,
No whole self-realization ; but denial
Of self's reality, self-governance.

Whence the commander, despot rigidly
By preconceived, so unadjustable
And inorganic fiat, worst of all
Forswears the self-world-organism, is most
Incapable, in all that touches him
As soldier, of an actual manliness ;
Most like machine when most authoritative,
Most judgmentless (most like these worldless walls)
When dooming most, when most court-martial judge.
And that some humanhood remains to these
By failure of the system quite to quench
Mutual regard for men's reality

DREYFUS

Of independent soul-initiative
Shall scarce excuse the system which still fails.

Whence am I righteously (no blame of theirs)
Doom'd as by plenum of accomplish'd fate
To destiny, deplorable enough,
Deserved of any man who earnestly
And faithfully as may be serves, supports
The military system ; who at last
By very innocence of all offense
Charged in indictment 'gainst the monstrous scheme,
By very militar trustworthiness
(As I an officer was trustworthy
As stones and chains are somewhat trustworthy)
Realizes self best by this judgmentless
Oblivion of responsibility
For right nor wrong. I had the less deserved
This desolateness had my manhood less
Been soldierly. — I, realizing at last
Soul's absolute self-responsibility,
Prologuize narrative (of soul's worst wrong
Men e'er committed) with confession full :
In so far as I served and did command
Trustworthily am I deservingly

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Victim of mine old mediæval zeal,
My monkish segregation self from world
Imposing an imposed authority
As martinet, disciplinary chief
To the death. Confess, mine innocence of all
Charges preferr'd against me for worst crime
Imputable: and shall in all I say
Damning their disregard for right nor wrong
Damn by each jot and tittle of my proof
Of innocence myself to living death,
This desolate existence: righteously.

So in the narrative I rise beyond
The degradation, realize utterly —
Since that first bitterness of mad turmoil
Transfiguring, regenerating all —
Absolute freedom of contemplating
The terms of this my life-imprisonment:
Teaching the world (save in their zeal the guards —
That one last loss which scarce will leave me sane! —
Obliterate this written testimony!)
Men's horrible denial, vital void;
This manlessness which is their martial law!

TESLA

A LIFE-TIME vow'd to service of mankind!
Here 'mid these marvel-working manifold
Automata, built of my brain and strength,
To labor to increase man's energy!
Ay, not to human weal alone, but all
Earth's is the service dedicate; for, though
Human activity must needs exploit
Subhuman, subhumanity none less
Gains as the world at large by every new
Economy of practice: energy
Of all earth more effective by each least
Subtler adjustment of the mechanism.
All earth a mechanism, whatsoe'er
Axes or fulcra; molecules or minds
Alike one reservoir of fluid force
Unstable, by whose instability
Is mankind measurable. I, a man,
But an automaton of vital force
Directing by mine energy supreme
Of subtlest-sure adjustments world's work all
Through the self-dedication. In despite
Of self-supposed originality,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Illusive independence; just because
Of mechanism-leadership, most subtly
A full-felt world-dependence; am I most
Machine, axis and fulcrum in this world!

Is this thing so? Am I this world-machine? —
Yea, for these many years I've swiftly work'd
Of this one guide and standard to my strength:
The more machine-like, so ideally
The more myself; the more this heart and brain
Conceive and execute automata,
The more myself realizes for the world
A genuine worldship. Such the mass; and such
The swiftness, such the motion: wherefore such
The mundane energy! Thus have I wrought,
Thus-wise believing. And, by work's success
Even in its sort, proved my philosophy
Of practical purport and sufficient thus
To truth. So have I held; and still hold so.
Yet though in this present pause from labor's stress,
In this unprecedented need to weigh
Well the world-worth of this my way of life,
Springs an enthusiasm, yea, a zeal
For just such course as hitherto pursued;

TESLA

Yet in excess of zeal justly demands,
Ay, strangely preconceives, prejudges, ay,
An ultimate criticism, evaluation
Of my belief's foundations. Face to face
Start forth enthusiasm, soul-profound,
Soul-overwhelming ; ay, and to its face
A sudden void of all which had seem'd proof,
A sudden need to prove anew a scheme
Wherein enthusiasm, valuing,
Self-judgment, criticism, have their place
For all-important. — Can the mere machine
Be less mechanic for a blank despair ?
Have or despair or faith a meaning for
Automata ? And yet faith and despair
Are fundamental. I am fill'd with faith,
Faith which but by supreme self-confidence
Demands establishment. In that despair
Which was mine for the fiery element
(Resuming locally an outlived past
Insensate of nebular immanence ?)
Which in an hour did lay waste all my work
Of decades ; in that sudden-sprung dismay
(At loss of cosmic process and contact
Too retrograde with force unfrigerate ?)

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Was nought of energy, no moving force,
No force-moved mass : the dedication, ceased ;
Stopp'd, the world-service. This automaton,
Call'd work, quite disestablish'd ; man or mind,
Axis or fulcrum shatter'd ; in despite
Of universal energy (that keen
Condition of the first mass-birth) despair
Immeasurable and immitigable
Of this one personal estimate did end
The mechanism. In that hour I sat
Of a smoking, ashen, soul-denuded world ;
Which by the very world-essential soul
Of me (my blank despair) proved so no world.
Now is the world of this self-dedicate
Enthusiasm reestablish'd ; yea,
Scarce by dependence upon heat or cold ;
Not by an automatic world-device
Of mechanism ; but by world-design,
New zeal intruding over all the void :
World rehabilitate by virtue of
This personal estimate new-vitalized.
Can such a world whose being so depends
On faith, non-being on a mere despair,
Be mechanism ? Can the self be given

TESLA

Wholly to mankind's service, nor thereby
But subtlier, richlier serve this personal sense
Of value, paramount and lord of all ?
Ha ! What my mere machines (analogous
With men's souls, but not thereby men !) must needs
Lack, is this manufacturing soul-self ;
Which not alone mechanically makes,
But knows : ' I make ; and, knowing so, transcend
' All mechanism '. Ha ! and this my soul
(Analogous with such automata,
But not thereby mechanic) actualizes
Self, both, and world-mechanics by best being
Not a world-dedication, but a stuff
Which knows : ' I dedicate and by this sense
' Alone am world-devoted '. So shall zeal
Establish zeal ; insistently maintain
Mechanics which alone were mechanism
By fundamental faith. Else were despair
Indifferent ; world indifferent, work or nought.
Else were the fiery destruction, no
Undoing ; nor the work evaluable.
Else were world-service utterly inane.

So, to the reconstruction. Whilst I work

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Still at the old mechanics, to conceive
World for a self-world, so conceive the scheme
Of service as to show the work in sooth
Auto-energetic : ay, no longer but
Postponement of world's sheer devitalizing.
For I have dream'd and taught that all my work
Aim'd at postponement of the inevitable
Infrigeration ; sought economy
Merely of dissipation with a view
To eking-out what energy remains
From the more-wasteful methods. I have sought
Decrease destruction in opposing war
With war's mechanics push'd to limit of
Conceivable effectiveness ; thereby
With horror of catastrophe to cow
The blustering militance. This have I done
Toward mass-economy, postponing time
Of final destitution. I have sought
By chemic subtlety to fertilize
Barrenness to a cropping, that mankind
At far less waste than of his flocks and herds
Might live by bread unto remoter years :
Postponing sure starvation. I have sought
Far beyond all else so to utilize

TESLA

Sun's energy remaining best by forcing
Electric instability, to use
Earth for one vast elastic reservoir
Of fluid potency ; by setting up
Local disturbances at least expense,
To energize with practical potency
For warmth, food, shelter, vitality or strength
As needed every molecule of earth
Without molecular destruction : yet
Admitting how inevitably must
Practical worth of molecules (if not
By deepest definition matter's self ?)
In the wellnigh interminable course
Of dissipation thus electrically
Set up, be slowly, fatally none less
Exhausted. For, howe'er device may aim
Toward fostering inequilibrium
Of potencies, must every transformation
To energy mechanical set up
A kinematic equilibrium ;
In so far irretrievably exhaust
The potency. Thus in a sort my work
Has seem'd a self-defeat ; a weak attempt
(However by comparison immense)

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Toward mere postponement of an evil day
Inevitable ; and an end of life,
Nowise disbarr'd. And in mechanic scheme
Must whatsoe'er economy but be
Relative to preceding waste ; none less
Modicum of exhaustion, dissipation
Proceeding still, if temporarily
New wealth yet unexploited open up
Delusive vista ; or if, for direct
Acknowledgment of waning, earlier wants
Be strictly curtail'd. Such has been my work
Acknowledging a self-defeat, devoting
Self to a general and still foredoom'd
Lost cause, forlorn hope without source of hope.
Such were a mere mechanics self-destroy'd.

Now but the mechanism proves to need
A self-establisher ; and equally
Possesses such. World-work is self-sustain'd.
Devotion is of zeal and faith ; the self
Ever more richly realized in the work
World-dedicate ; and nowise in such work
Susceptible to any self-defeat.
What of this world, which, being world of self,

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Mechanics auto-vital, self-sustain'd,
Cannot, whatso the dedication, still
In dedication suffer self-defeat ?
What of a world of faith, self-consciously
A work and an evaluating of work ?
Were my works wrong ? Were there no value in
Civilization, ever earning more
By less comparative of waste ? Or were
Such effort valuable, reason-right,
Definable in any terms at all,
Just because over and above the work
Is valuation : consciousness and faith ?
Man cannot live by bread alone ; man's wars
Shall cease but for disgust — at worst, dismay —
Which enginery (putting-aside from self
Destructiveness) may mean : not enginery
(Pride in a pompous, loud ingeniousness)
Be war's cessation ; and 't were zeal for work
In work's enlarged horizon which my skill
Shall kindle : not the work-fact, but the joy
In estimated process skill-sustain'd.
Such were solution. I deny no whit
The perfect-proved mechanical dismay
Which fronts us ; from the first every least act —

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Defined mechanicwise for physical
Equilibration of some potency —
Has been and still shall be self-dissipant,
Doom'd to destruction, still degenerating
Despite all ingenuity ; and so
Unthinkable for any world of faith,
Enthusiasm or intelligence
Of workmanship. So from the first has been
Evaluation ; which through every stroke
Of mass-in-motion more and more intends
Purposive adaptation ; more and more
Posits economy, by utterly
Forswearing standard of economism
For fundamental. Every motion-mass,
Factors of energy, were such but by
The estimation : 'I am mass and move '.
Every dissemination, every fall
Of energy toward equilibrium
(In the cooling process of the fiery scheme)
Stands register'd eternally, by more
And more recomplication through and through
The evaluation ; which, by every move
And loss mechanic, waxes in design'd
Enthusiasm, in the psychic strength

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Of comprehension, organized, concrete
Self-adaptation, self-devotion through
Richlier a world of process, of a growth
Equal to regress ; yet by nature of
Growth by contrast with physical decay,
Infinitely, ay, qualitative-wise
Supremely of importance. Through and through
Is world a scheme of matter-motived loss :
Parallel'd, ay, in sure polarity
Of meaning, by its equal counterpart,
The psychic increase : as psychology
Means growth ; so physics, dissipation ; and both,
One static process. As all energy,
Or wastefully, or by my subtlest scheme
Economized, must dissipate (the mass
Call'd man, move as a mass with less each hour
Of physic-energy in flesh and brain)
So must the zeal (if mass be possible
Even for its own defeat) of comprehension,
Enthusiastic teleology
Of ordering estimate evaluate more
And more unendingly. My whole work looks
Ever toward richlier comprehending world
In self ; toward organism (fleshly still

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

If fleshly less preponderant) which shall be
As far beyond our present human frame
As man excels the nuclear molecule
Of star-stuff. As my world-intelligence
Sprung from the nebula ; so springs, in just
The same continuous frigeration, some
More-than-man and some more-than-heat to hold
System eternally : some less-than-heat
With heat's evanishment indifferently
To life's perpetuance. I in my purge
By fiery holocaust, I in my sense
Of world-habilitation totally
Conclude an universe ; as molecule
Of nebula concluded, still concludes
Only less man-significantly such
Eternal worldship. Every organism
Chemic or supra-physiologic each
Is perpetuity. Mine energy
Of world is inexhausting, being a faith. —
What possibility of after-life ?
What meaning to expected end of all ?
What worth to cyclic rhythm, counterpoise
And energy exhausted ? These were mere
Partial interpretation of work done

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And so defined as ended, still foredoom'd !
The worker were not done, still less foredoom'd
Who is criterion of continuance !

What else were spirit than this zeal to work
A self-salvation by my made machines
Serving in sort my human world ? And yet
More than this manifold and marvel-seeming
Mechanic ingenuity were this :

' I make : and know ; and cannot foil my faith
' Which were criterion even of despair ;
' Eternity and continuity
' Even of the fiery purge, ashen defeat '.

So have I sought and found automaton ;
Auto-establisher through every stroke
Of world-dependent, man-devoted zeal.
Only by mass-transcendence might I mean
Mass, motion, energy : and I am these :
Original, creative, absolute
As any other among all mankind ! —

Nay, 't were insane ! Were not the fiery fact
Lord of despair, master of this machine,
Irrevocably proved, by mockery
Of mine illusive insight, from the first

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Creator and created ? Such defeat,
As by too great success at calling back
The obsolete incandescence, proves the world
Unmeaning mass ; my faith or my despair
Product — and only thereby factor too —
In the world-energy. I feel and will
(With far less vital zeal) but as a flame
Devours : and ashens with its food's surcease.





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